

T O U R

THROUGH PARTS OF

F R A N C E.





T O U R

THROUGH THE

WESTERN, SOUTHERN,

AND

INTERIOR PROVINCES OF FRANCE,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS;

By N. W R A X A L L, JUN. Esq.

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INTERIOR PROVINCE OF AFRICA

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**A**  
**T O U R**  
**THROUGH PARTS OF**  
**F R A N C E.**  
**L E T T E R I.**

Carenten in Low Normandy,  
Saturday, 26th Aug. 1775.

**Y**OU shall be obeyed, my dear Sir;  
and I prepare myself with pleasure,  
to give you the same minute narration  
of the events which diversify my present  
tour, as I did in my last round the Baltic.

I landed in this kingdom, at Cherbourg,  
last Wednesday evening. The ruins of

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the



the pier which was demolished by our troops in the late war, present a mournful picture of devastation, as they still remain exactly in the state they were left on the re-embarkation of the English in 1758, the town itself impresses with no higher ideas of opulence or commerce. It is a wretched collection of houses, crowded together in a sandy valley, close to the shore; dirty, irregular, and mean. The situation, in the center of the channel, and between the two Capes of Barfleur and La Hogue, has alone made it always important in the eye of policy.

If Havre de Grace has been ever esteemed the key of High Normandy, Cherbourg is equally so of the Lower. During the many reigns in which it was subject to the English government, our princes appear to have been sensible of its full value. They often landed there, when called over by revolts of their barons or subjects; and we find the Norman princes, who frequently resided at Winchester, usually embarked for this port, in preference to any other.

A very



## T H R O U G H   F R A N C E.   3

A very strong garrison was generally maintained in it; and Charles the seventh terminated his long train of victories over the timid and divided counsels of our Henry the sixth, by this important conquest. It was re-annexed to the crown of France in 1450.—I am surprised to find that the ministry have never fortified this city. Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, into whose hands it was sequestered in the fifteenth century, surrounded it with walls in the Gothic style of defence, which remained till Louis the fourteenth's reign, who dismantled it, in the intention of erecting new ones; but the Marquis de Barbesieux, who was then his minister, found other more pressing calls for the public money, in the wars which opened the present century, and shook his master's throne.

About half a mile from the town is a cliff or rock of prodigious height. I ascended it by a long winding path, across the adjacent mountain. On the top I found a little convent of Benedictine monks,

monks, or hermits, for so they term themselves—who have chosen to quit the vale below, and retired to the bleak summit, cultivate a few acres of ground, sterile and stony, from which they procure with difficulty a miserable subsistence. One of them, the Superior, after having shewn me the little chapel and refectoire, led me to the extreme point of the cliff, on which stands a crucifix. “ This (said he) is the  
“ spot from whence king John of England  
“ is said to have thrown his nephew, prince  
“ Arthur of Bretagne. Tradition re-  
“ ports, that he perpetrated it with his own  
“ hand, in a tempestuous night; and that  
“ the sea, which, though now expelled,  
“ then washed the foot of the rock, re-  
“ ceived the body of the unhappy prince.”  
—You remember, no doubt, perfectly this part of the English history. It is however, a very disputable circumstance, and there is scarce any illustrious death more concealed from the public knowledge, than that in question. It is certain that prince Arthur, after having been conducted through several provinces, with  
ignominy,





ignominy, by his uncle, finally disappeared in 1203.—But so far are historians from positively ascertaining the time or manner of his exit, that they disagree in the place of his confinement, previous to that event; and whether he was imprisoned in the castle of Rouen, Falaise, or in that of Cherbourg—for these three are all named—we are not able precisely to determine.

There is another vestige of the english monarchs yet in being, which stands on incontestable authority, and can plead more than mere tradition. To the westward of the town, about a mile distant, a little rivulet empties itself into the sea, it is called the “Chantereine.” In a meadow, a few paces from the shore, stands a small chapel, which was built by Matilda, daughter of Henry the first, and mother of Henry the second. History relates, that in the reign of Stephen, who usurped the throne, she passed from Wareham into Normandy, to raise fresh forces in support of her claim. Being attacked by



a violent tempest at sea, she had recourse to the same means which Philip the second used at St. Quintin, and Clement the seventh at the sack of Rome, to avert the danger—I mean prayers. It does not appear that she implored the Deity, or even Jesus Christ; but, reposing her whole hope in the immaculate Virgin, she made a vow, that if she ever set her foot again on land, she would sing a hymn to the Virgin on the spot where she alighted. Her vows were accepted; the storm abated, and she arrived happily. The instant she got on shore, one of the sailors reminded her of her promise, in these words, “Chante, reine, vechi terre!” and as it was exactly at the mouth of this rivulet, the exclamation gave rise to the name it bears to this day. Not content with so simple a mark of her gratitude, she erected the chapel, of which I spoke, which is called “Notre Dame du vœu.” I went into it. The story is recorded at length. The architecture bears every mark of extreme rudeness and barbarism, such as characterised the age in which it was built. Six centuries, which have elapsed

elapsed since its construction, have loosened the stones which compose it, and begin to threaten its demolition. As I went out, I remarked an iron box, apparently coeval with the chapel; and over it, on the wall, in characters almost erased, was a little inscription, signifying, that it was intended for charitable donations towards repairing "Our Lady du Vœu."—How could I withstand so forcible a request from a sovereign? I let fall a bit of money into the box, and went away.

Cherbourg pretends to very high antiquity. It is said to have been originally called Cæsarbourg. Richard the second, Duke of Normandy, and uncle to William the Conqueror, erected a strong castle here, and having come in person to view it, was so pleased with the apparent importance of the place for the conservation of his duchy, that he exclaim'd in rapture, 'Ly castel est un cher bourg per mi!' This trifling circumstance was the origin of its present name. Coins of several Roman emperors have been dug up

up here at different times; and a gentleman shewed one, in fine preservation, of Antoninus Pius, found only a few years since. Other traditions confirm this fact; and the beautiful "Val-de-Saire," which lies in the eastern part of the Coutentin, near Cape Barfleur, is said to be a corruption of "Val-de-Ceres," which it was called by the Romans, in honour of that goddess, from its extraordinary fertility.

I left Cherbourg yesterday morning, and after dining at Valognes, a considerable town, arrived here last night. I would have proceeded for Coutances this morning, but Madame Clotide's marriage with the prince de Piedmont has left the provinces without horses, as they are ordered to Paris, to convey the princess and her suite to Turin. I am therefore under the necessity of staying till to-morrow; and, for want of other amusement, I have wandered over this place and its environs.

The town is small, but the ruins of the castle are very beautiful. It is celebrated  
in



in the civil wars under Charles the ninth, and in those of the League, which followed, in the reigns of Henry the third and fourth. The architecture of the great church is elegant, it having been erected in the fifteenth century, when the Gothic structures had almost attained to their highest point of beauty and perfection. There was nothing in the inside which merited attention, except an altar, and a painting dedicated to St. Cæcilia. The sweet saint appears playing on a soft of harpsichord, her fingers sinking negligently into the keys. A blue mantle, loosely buckled over her shoulder, exposes part of her neck to view, and her fair hair floats down her back. The pupils of her eyes are thrown up to heaven, in a fine frenzy of musical enthusiasm.—If there were many such canonized beauties in the Romish calendar, it would be a dangerous religion. The heart erects altars to them, without the aid of piety.

I shall continue my remarks as I proceed

Coutances,



## L E T T E R II.

Coutances, Monday, 28th Aug. 1775.

**I**T is only six leagues from Carenten to this city; but the road, even at this season of the year, is so bad, that those of Westphalia and Brandenburg are fine in comparison. The roads of Low Normandy are infamous to a proverb; and I should never have had the boldness to venture through them, if I had been previously acquainted with their nature. Coutances has, however in some degree, made amends for the difficulties I found in arriving at it, and repaid me by the objects it affords of entertainment. It was founded by the Romans, who established a legion here, and called it "Castra Constantia." They fortified it with very strong walls, which existed till Louis the XI's reign; who demolished them, because the place being part of the domain of his brother Charles, refused to admit a royal garrison. It stands on a hill, the sides of which descend with prodigious

## THROUGH FRANCE. 11

digious rapidity. Beyond the vale, a range of hills rise like a superb amphitheatre, and invests it on every side. The houses bear all the marks of antiquity in their structure and taste, which is rude to a great degree. Many of them have doubtless stood five or six hundred years; and on one, the style of which merits peculiar study, is the date 1007 yet remaining, in very legible characters.

On the summit of the hill, in the centre of the town, stands the cathedral. I have spent several hours in the examination of its architecture. There is a grotesque beauty spread over the whole; and the fantastic ornaments of Gothic building are mingled with a wondrous delicacy and elegance in many of its parts. It was begun in 1047; and William the Conqueror, king of England, assisted in person at its solemn consecration some years after. I went up to the top of the great center tower, to enjoy one of the finest prospects imaginable. The town of Granville appears in front, and beyond it the

the islands of Chaufey. Jearsey, at the distance of seven leagues to the north forms a noble object. The country on all sides, towards St. Lo, Avranches, and Carenten, is a garden, rich, cultivated, and shaded with woods. They say that a certain barbarous monk, named St. Eremptiole, founded this see as early as the year 430, in the emperor Theodosius the second's reign, and under the papacy of Celestine the first.—Henry the fifth took the city in the year 1418, after a short siege; but it returned to the crown of France under the declining power of the house of Lancaster.

Contances is large, but the convents form a considerable part of its size, and the religious of different orders, a great part of its inhabitants. As it is two leagues distant from the sea, and has not any navigable river, there is no commerce; but some few provincial noblesse reside in it.



I am charmed with the Coutentin: all this part of Low Normandy is so called. From Cherbourg to Valognes, it was mountainous and heathy; but in general the country is inferior to no part of the north of Europe. Fine acclivities clothed with wood, and rich vallies covered with harvests, form a most pleasing scene. There is, notwithstanding, an apparent penury and nastiness in the dwellings of the People. The hand of oppression is visible in their habit, their hovels, their appearance. I saw none of those neat and pretty pealants, so common in our most secluded villages.

The Coutentin has given birth to some illustrious men. Those brave and romantic heroes, so famous in ancient story, Tancred, and Robert Guiscard—who, after having expelled the Saracens from Apulia and Calabria, founded the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, which they transmitted to their descendants—were Counts of Hauteville, a little town not far from Valognes. History informs us,

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that



that Robert Duke of Normandy, and son to the Conqueror, the most generous and the most necessitous prince of his age, mortgaged this part of his dominions to his brother Rufus, previous to his voyage to the Holy Land. The sum, if I remember right, which he received, was only ten thousand marks, which the rapacious Rufus levied on his English subjects.

You see I call in history or tradition to my assistance every moment. Indeed it is impossible to travel through this duchy, where our ancient monarchs held their so frequent residence, without being reminded continually of some of those anecdotes transmitted to us respecting them. Adieu!

In the evening I proceed to granville,

Granville,

L É T T E R III.

Granville, Wednesday, 30th Aug. 1775.

**T**HERE is perhaps no pleasure greater than that of communicating pleasure received; and as admiration is one of the most elegant and interesting sources from which it can be drawn, we usually listen with extreme readiness to any addresses made to that passion. I wish to prepare you for a recital, in which the marvellous and the astonishing may predominate; though you may do me the justice to believe, they will ever be under the guidance of truth.

Superstition, the parent of a thousand evils to mankind, has yet given rise to such extraordinary and magnificent productions in every age, as almost incline one to pardon her crimes and follies. I am just returned from the survey of one

of the first of these ; and shall endeavour to address my imperfect description of it to your heart and affections.

I left Coutances Monday evening. The distance to this town is only six leagues, through a continuation of the same agreeable country which I have already painted to you. Desirous to visit the celebrated " Mont St. Michel, I hired two horses, and set out yesterday morning. It is about twenty miles from Granville, and the road lying along the sea-shore, renders it very pleasant. I got to Genet, a little village, before noon. From hence it is only a league to the Mount ; but as it lies entirely across the sands, which are only passable at low tide, it becomes indispensibly requisite to procure a guide. I did so, and arrived there at one in the afternoon.

This extraordinary rock—for it is no more—rises in the middle of the bay of Avranches. Nature has compleatly fortified one side, by its craggy and almost perpendicular



perpendicular descent, which renders it impracticable for courage or address, however consummate, to scale or mount it. The other parts are surrounded by walls fenced with semilunar towers in the Gothic manner; but sufficiently strong, superadded to the advantages of its situation, to despise all attack. At the foot of the mountain, begins a street or town, which winds round its base to a considerable height. Above, are chambers where prisoners of state are kept, and other buildings for residence; and on the summit is erected the abbey itself, occupying a prodigious space of ground, and of a strength and solidity equal to its enormous size; since it has stood all the storms of Heaven, in its elevated and exposed situation, during many centuries.— I spent the whole afternoon in the different parts of this edifice; and as the Swiss, who conducted me through them, found he could not gratify my curiosity too minutely, he left no apartment or chamber unseen.

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The "Sale de Chevalerie," or knights' hall, reminded me of that at Marienbourg in Polish Prussia. It is equally spacious; but more barbarous and rude, because some hundred years prior in its erection. Here the knights of St. Michael used to meet in solemn convocation on important occasions. They were the defenders and guardians of this mountain and abbey, as those of the temple, and of St. John of Jerusalem, were to the holy sepulchre.— At one end is a painting of the archangel, the patron of their order; and in this hall Louis the eleventh first instituted, and invested with the insignia of knighthood, the chevaliers of the cross of St. Michael.

We passed on through several lesser rooms into a long passage, on one side of which the Swiss opened a door, and through a narrow entrance, perfectly dark, he led me, by a second door, into an apartment, or dungeon—for it rather merited the latter than the former appellation—in the middle of which stood a cage. It was composed of prodigious wooden bars;

bars; and the wicket which admitted into it was ten or twelve inches in thickness. I went into the inside; the space it composed was about twelve or fourteen feet, square; and it might be nearly twenty in height. This was the abode of many eminent victims in former ages whose names and miseries are now obliterated and forgotten.

“There was, said my conductor,  
 “towards the latter end of the last century, a certain news-writer in Holland,  
 “who had presumed to print some  
 “very severe and sarcastic reflections on  
 “Madame de Maintenon, and Louis the  
 “fourteenth. Some months after, he  
 “was induced, by a person sent expressly  
 “for that purpose, to make a tour into  
 “French Flanders. The instant he had  
 “quitted the Dutch territories, he was  
 “put under arrest, and immediately, by  
 “his majesty’s express command, conducted to this place. They shut him up  
 “in this cage. Here he lived upwards  
 “of three and twenty years, and here  
 “he,



“ he, at length, expired.—During the  
“ long nights of winter,” continued the  
man, “ no candle or fire was allowed him.  
“ He was not permitted to have any  
“ book. He saw no human face except  
“ the gaoler, who came once every day  
“ to present him, through a hole in the  
“ wicket, his little portion of bread and  
“ wine. No instrument was given him,  
“ with which he could destroy himself;  
“ but he found means at length to draw  
“ out a nail from the wood, with which  
“ he cut or engraved, on the bars of his  
“ cage, certain fleurs de lis, and armorial  
“ bearings, which formed his only em-  
“ ployment and recreation.” — These I  
saw, and they are indeed very curiously  
performed, with so rude a tool.

As I stood within this dreadful engine;  
my heart sunk within me. I execrated  
the vengeance of the prince, who, for such  
a trespass, could inflict so disproportionate  
and tremendous a punishment. I thought  
the towers and pinnacles of the abbey  
seemed to shake, as conscious of the cruelty  
committed

committed in their gloomy round; and I hastened out of this sad apartment, impressed with feelings of the deepest pity and indignation.

“It is now fifteen years,” said the Swiss, “since a gentleman terminated his days in that cage; it was before I came to reside here: but there is one instance within my own memory. Monsieur de F——, a person of rank, was conducted here by command of the late king; he remained three years shut up in it. I fed him myself every day; but he was allowed books and candle to divert his misery; and, at length, the abbot, touched with his deplorable calamities, requested and obtained the royal pardon. He was set free, and is now alive in France.

“The subterranean chambers,” added he in this mountain, are so numerous, that we know them not ourselves. There are certain dungeons, called Oubliettes, into which they were accustomed

“customed anciently to let down male-  
“factors guilty of very heinous crimes:  
“they provided them with a loaf of  
“bread and a bottle of wine; and then  
“they were totally forgotten, and left to  
“perish by hunger in the dark vaults of  
“of the rock. This punishment has  
“not however been inflicted by any king  
“in the last or present century.

We continued our progress through the abbey. He led me into a chamber, in one corner of which was a kind of window; between this and the wall of the building was a very deep space or hollow of near an hundred feet perpendicular, and at bottom, was another window, opening to the sea. It is called “The hole of Montgomeri.” The history of it is this.—You will recollect, that in the year 1559, Henry the second, king of France, was unfortunately killed at a tournament by the Count de Montgomeri. It was not intended on the nobleman’s part; and he was forced, contrary to his inclination, to push the lance against his sovereign



sovereign, by his express command. He was a Hugonot, and, having escaped the massacre of Paris and Coligni, made head against the royal forces in Normandy, supported by our Elizabeth with arms and money. Being driven from his fortresses in those parts, he retired to a rock, called the "Tombelaine." This is another, similar to the "Mont St. Michel," only three quarters of a league distant from it, and of nearly equal dimensions. At that time there was a castle on it, afterwards demolished, and of which scarce any vestiges now remain. From this fastness, only accessible at low tides, he continually made excursions, and annoyed the enemy, who never dared to attack him. He coined money, laid all the adjacent country under contribution, and rendered himself universally dreaded. Desirous however to surprize the "Mont St. Michel," he found means to engage one of the monks resident in the abbey, who promised to give him the signal for his enterprize, by displaying a hankerchief. The treacherous monk having made the  
signal

signal betrayed him, and armed all his associates, who waited Montgomery's arrival. The chieftain came attended by fifty chosen soldiers, desperate and capable of any attempt. They crossed the sand, and having placed their scaling-ladders, mounted one by one: as they came to the top, they were dispatched each in turn, without noise. Montgomery, who followed last, at length discovered the perfidy, and escaped with only two of his men, with whom he regained the "Tombe-laine." They preserve with great care the ladders and grappling irons used on this occasion—You perhaps remember the subsequent fate of the Count himself. He was at last besieged and taken prisoner by the Marechal de Matignon, in 1574, at Domfront in Normandy; and Catherine of Medicis, who detested him for his having been tho' innocently, the cause of her husband's death, ordered him to be immediately executed.

The church itself detained me a long time, and is matter of high curiosity. It

rests

rests on nine pillars of most enormous dimensions, which stand upon the solid rock. I did not measure them; but, as far as the gloominess of the place would admit, I apprehend that each of them must be five and twenty feet in circumference: besides these, there are two others, of much inferior size, which support the centre of the church, over which is the tower. If the prodigious incumbent weight be considered, and the nature of its situation, nothing less massy could sustain the edifice. They seem as if designed to outlive the ravages of time, and the convulsions of nature.—But before we enter the church itself, I must inform you of the absurd and legendary cause which first produced it.

In the reign of Childebert the second, there was a bishop of Avranches named St. Aubert. To this holy man, the archangel Michael was pleased to appear one night, and order him to go to this rock, and there build him a church. St. Aubert, who seems to have been a little in-

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credulous



credulous, treated it as a dream: the angel came again, repeated his injunction, and not being obeyed, the third time, he, by way of imprinting it on the bishop's memory, made an hole in his skull, by touching it with his thumb. In the treasury of the church I saw this curious skull. It is enclosed in a little shrine of gold, and a crystal, which opens over the orifice, admits the gratification of curiosity by the minutest examination of it. The hole is of a size and shape justly proportioned to the thumb supposed to have produced it, and whether done with a knife, or by what means it is perforated, I cannot determine. The bishop, however, upon this sensible mark of the divine pleasure, delayed no longer; but repaired to the rock, and constructed a small church, as he had been commanded.—Here fable ends; and true history, supplying its place, informs us, that it was in 966 when Richard the second duke of Normandy began to build the abbey. It was compleated about the year 1070, under William the Conqueror, though many

many other additions were made by succeeding abbots.

The treasury is crouded with relics innumerable, among which some few have a real and intrinsic value. There is a fine head of Charles the sixth of France cut in crystal, which drew my attention. They have got, heaven knows by what means, an arm of Edward the Confessor's, and they shewed me another, of "St. Richard, king of England." Who this saint and prince was, I confess, is beyond my comprehension. I am sure they could not term Richard the first so, unless his crusade against Saladine wiped out all his sins, and canonized him. Richard the second has no better pretensions to sanctity. I do not mention him who fell at Bosworth: so that who this royal saint was, I must leave you to divine. As to the monks, they know nothing about it; but they were positive he was a king of England. — An enormous golden cockle-shell, weighing many pounds, given by Richard

the second duke of Normandy, when he founded the abbey, is worthy remark.

In the middle of the choir hangs a stone, which is said to have fallen on the head of Louis the eleventh at the siege of Besançon, without doing him the smallest injury. This, he conceived, and with reason, must have been owing to some wondrous divine interposition; for the stone weighs, I should suppose, at least ten pounds. Louis, though the greatest monster who ever filled a throne, was yet, at times, exceedingly pious: he used to come very often in pilgrimage to "Mont St. Michel;" and he ordered this stone to be suspended by a chain in the choir, and left an annual sum in lands to maintain priests to say masses, for his preservation from so imminent a danger.

The refectory, the cloisters, the cells of the monks, are all (or rather they have been) very magnificent and spacious; but a vast sum of money is wanted to put the whole in repair, and reinstate what the  
lapse



lapse of ages defaces and deforms. One of the great towers is cracked and shaken. They have written repeatedly to the ministry, to know his majesty's pleasure respecting it; but no answer has been returned. It will probably tumble soon, and must necessarily, from its prodigious height and size, draw with it a considerable part of the adjoining edifices.

The late king sequestered the revenues of the abbey, which are very ample. A prior is substituted instead of the abbot, and the number of religious reduced from thirty to fourteen. Perhaps a few years more may even extinguish these; and St. Michael himself, though composed of gold, be melted down to support the expence of a *bal paré*.—It is at present considered rather as a prison of state, and will more probably be repaired on that account, than as an erection of piety. The apartments are, at this time, occupied by many illustrious captives, who have been sent here by "*Lettre de cachet*," for crimes of state. They are detained in stricter

or easier confinement, according to the royal mandate. There are in one range of rooms eight, who eat at a round table together. They are allowed each a pint of wine; but neither knives or forks are ever given them, lest they should commit suicide, to escape the horrors of captivity. No person is permitted to enter that division where they live, or can hold any conversation with them. Four of these are sent here since the accession of his present majesty. There are others who have the liberty of going into every part of the Mount without restraint; but to profit of this permission they must be habited as priests, and of consequence, universally known. To escape, one should suppose impossible.—but what cannot human subtlety effect, when pushed to despair? It is only sixteen days since a Monsieur de C——, who had been confined ten months, succeeded in an attempt to set himself free. I was shewn the place from whence he let himself down by a rope: it is near an hundred feet perpendicular. He crossed the sands immediately

diately, while the sea was low; and it is imagined he has embarked for Jersey or England, as no intelligence has been received concerning him.

Some apartments are destined to a species of wretches yet more deplorable—I mean, to lunatics. There are several of high rank. In the cloisters of the abbey, a person accosted me in very polite terms. He was apparently above fifty years of age; his habit was squalid; at his button-hole hung a cross of St. Micheal, fantastically adorned with ribbons. His face, though brown and sickly, had a somewhat noble, commanding, and engaging; his hair of a deep black, mixed with grey, hung floating upon his shoulders; and over his whole person was an air of dignity in ruin. It was the Marquis de R—, a Breton nobleman, who has been shut up here five and twenty years. He is insane, but harmless, and perfectly observant of all the forms in cultivated life.—— None but persons of quality are ever sent here on this account.

I thought



I thought the age of pilgrimages had been at an end in all European nations, and that devotion contented itself with venerating its saints at home—but will you believe it, when I assure you, the number of pilgrims, who come annually to pay their vows to St. Michael at this Mount, are between eight and ten thousand? They are mostly peasants, and men of mean occupations; but even among the noblesse there are not wanting those, who are induced to make this journey from principles of piety. The little town is sometimes so crowded with them, that not a bed is to be procured. I saw at least six when I was there. They were young men and women. Their habit exactly corresponded with our ideas of them, as drawn from ancient ballads. Their hats were covered with cockle-shells, laced round the edges; and on the crown was a guilt coronet, above which was the cross. A ribbon in the same form was tied across their breasts, and all over their cloaths were placed little images of St. Michael vanquishing the devil. I asked them from whence

whence they came? they said, from Champagne; a very considerable distance across all France. I put several questions to them; and they would willingly have followed me when I went up to the top of the steeple; but the Swiss, who was well accustomed to see these poor devotees arrive, repulsed them very roughly for their temerity, “*Que diable?*” says he, “*allez, prier le bon Saint Michael, si vous voulez! Je ne conduis pas le menu peuple!*” The poor pilgrims retired immediately, without a word.—It is said, the late dauphin was here incog. about nineteen or twenty years ago; and the old man who conducted me across the sands, assured me he had the honour to be his highness’s guide, without knowing at the time his rank. His character was that of a bigot, and I am not at all surprised at such a proof of it.—At the foot of the mountain, close to the waves, is a very fine well of fresh water; but as this might and would be undoubtedly possessed by an enemy in case of a siege, they have contrived to hollow into the  
solid

solid rock, cisterns proportionate to every other part of the building, and capable of containing many hundred tons of water; they say more than twelve hundred. Indeed to besiege it would be madness: an hundred men might defend it against ten thousand assailants, and any number of vessels; nor could it be, if taken, converted to any sort of use.

The town itself is almost as curious as any other part of the Mount. I doubt not there are many houses in it five or six hundred years old; and I did not see one which seemed to be built since Louis the eleventh's time. The whole number of persons resident in the abbey, and in the town, does not exceed an hundred and eighty, in time of peace. A militia, composed of the Bourgeoisie, mount guard, to prevent any of the prisoners from escaping. In time of war there are five hundred soldiers commonly in garrison; and they assured me, so vast and numerous are the chambers in different parts, that thirteen thousand might be disposed



disposed of without any sort of inconvenience.

They sell little legendary books in the town: I have bought them all, in hopes to find some historical anecdotes or traditions respecting the place, and the various important events or sieges it has undergone;——but alas! this is a vain attempt. They are all stuffed with miracles, and absurdities too ridiculous to repeat; and St. Michael and St. Aubert are the only heroes who make any figure in the annals of monkery.——I would most willingly have inspected the archives which are laid up in the abbey; but this is not permitted. It must be a very curious research, since it is probable every king of England, from the Conqueror to Henry the third, had been many times here from motives of devotion or curiosity.

In the year 1090, Robert duke of Normandy, and William Rufus, besieged their brother Henry a long time in the  
 “Mont

“Mont St. Michel.” It must be presumed they were masters of the foot of the rock; for otherwise it would be impracticable to invest it. The prince could never have been reduced to surrender from force; but he wanted water, and from this necessity he was on the point of yielding the fortrefs, when Robert, with that benevolence and generosity which marked his character, sent him some pipes of wine: and this succour, (like that which Henry the fourth permitted his troops to give the Pasifians,) enabled Henry to hold out. Rufus reproached him for his conduct; “What,” said Robert, “shall we suffer our brother to die of thirst?—And what return did he meet with? An imprisonment of twenty-eight years in a vaulted chamber of Cardiff castle, where he expired.

I fear to have tired you with so diffuse a description of this mountain. I set out this morning, and, conducted by the same guide across the sands, reached the village of Genet, at ten. Numbers of people are drowned

drowned every year in passing this place. The sea comes in with a fury and rapidity beyond idea, and frequently arrests unhappy travellers, who presume to venture without a guide. I saw, in the churchyard of Genet, a grave where five persons were interred, who perished within these few days, and similar accidents are common.—It was noon when I returned to Granville, my fancy entirely occupied with the extraordinary scenes to which I had been witness, and which I have endeavoured to depicture without study or arrangement.

This town is situated very pleasantly on a neck of land stretching into the sea. It is not small; but the buildings are scattered, mean, and irregular, extending near a mile from one extremity to the other, part on the rock above, and part on the vale below.—It is open to the sea, there being no bay, though they have constructed part of a pier to shelter the shipping. Some small redoubts and batteries have been erected during the late war, on

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the



the eminences round the place, to defend it from invasion; but they are of no strength.

It is time to conclude this long letter. My next will be probably from some part of Bretagne. Adieu!

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

St. Malo, Tuesday, 4th Sept. 1775.

**I** Arrived here yesterday morning. It was very late Saturday night when I reached Avranches; and had I been a Roman Catholick, I should inevitably have put both myself and my carriage under the protection of the Virgin, or some saint the patron of travellers, before I adventured into these perilous roads. The chaise once stuck fast for near an hour, and I was obliged to employ a dozen peasants, who with the help pick-axes, and infinite labour, at length heaved it up by main strength.

Avranches detained me a few hours. The city is the nastiest I have yet seen in France; but its situation is very fine.

The cathedral stands on a hill, which terminates abrupt: the front extends to the extreme verge, and overhangs the preceps. It bears the marks of high antiquity. The towers are decayed in many places, though its original construction has been wondrously strong. While I stood under it, one of the priests very politely accosted me, and offered, as I appeared to be a stranger, to give me some information respecting it.

“The cathedral,” said he, “has been  
“the work of different ages; but the two  
“western towers are supposed to be as old  
“as the eighth century, the bishopric itself  
“having been founded about the year  
“four hundred. One of the english kings,  
“Henry the second, received absolution  
“here, from the Papal Nuncio, for the  
“murder of St. Thomas-a-Becket, in  
“1172, and the stone on which he kneel-  
“ed during the performance of that so-  
“lemn ceremony, still exists.” He carried  
me to look at it. The length is about  
thirty inches, and the breadth twelve. It  
stands



stands before the north portal, and on it is engraved a chalice in commemoration of the fact.

The ruins of the castle are very extensive and superb; and beneath lies a rich extent of country, covered with orchards, and abounding with grain.

I continued my journey Sunday at noon, and reached the city of Dol in Bretagne the same evening. At Pontorson the two provinces separate, the little river Coesnon forming the boundary. Dol must detain every man who has a veneration for the vestiges of antiquity. Except the episcopal palace, which is an elegant modern building, there is not a house within the walls, which does not seem to have been erected in ages the most barbarous and remote. The fortifications are in the same style, and appear to have been antiently very formidable. History confirms this. William the Conqueror twice laid siege to Dol, and was twice repulsed. In 1075, Philip king of France

had

forced him to make a hasty retreat into Normandy, and when he again attempted to make himself master of it in 1085, Alain duke of Bretagne obliged him to retire somewhat ignominiously. Henry the second, more successful, carried it by storm in 1173.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening, and I walked near half a league from the town to view a singular curiosity. In the middle of a very large orchard stands a stone, composed of only one piece, and between forty and fifty feet high. Its circumference near the base equals its height. The form is circular and pyramidical. It is called "La Pierre du champ dolent."—"The stone of the field of lamentation." There are no certain accounts when, or on what occasion it was thus erected; but the traditions relative to it are equally numerous and contradictory. I had the pleasure to see and converse with the gentleman on whose estate it is situated. He said the most approved opinion was, that Julius Cæsar had

had caused it to be erected as a trophy to mark the extent of his conquests, after a bloody engagement, which he gained over the inhabitants of Armorica. The peasants are fully persuaded the devil did it in one of his idle hours; "but," added he, "I have myself caused the earth to be removed round its base to the distance of forty feet on every side; and I find that it joins to a prodigious rock, from which it seems to have sprung; so that I am induced to think, notwithstanding its name, that it is a natural, and not a factitious production." However caused, it is very extraordinary, and deserves an attentive investigation.

I got to this city yesterday. The castle was built by the celebrated Anne of Bretagne, who annexed the duchy to the crown of France by her marriage with Charles the eighth. She was asked by the engineer who constructed it, what plan she would choose as its model. "My coach," said she. It is so in effect. A large square area within constitutes the body:



body: two small towers in the fore-part answer to the fore-wheels of a carriage, as two others of superior size do to the hinder ones; a projection in front forms the pole, and an arched nich behind corresponds to the place where the laquais were used to stand. Conscious that posterity would accuse her of caprice and absurdity, she has obviated their criticisms in a manner truly royal, by an inscription engraved on the wall, and very legible at this hour. I read it,

“*Qui que gronde, tel est mon plaisir!*”

You will allow this is the reasoning of a sovereign — St. Malo is situated in an island joined to the continent by a causeway. The ancient city and bishopric were half a league distant, on the mainland; but in the year 1172, John de la Grille removed his residence to the little island of St. Aaron, and began the town which now exists. The houses are all lofty and elegant, but the streets, owing to the want of ground, and the number of inhabitants, are narrow dirty and ill-pierced.

To-morrow I proceed to Rennes.

## LETTER V.

Nantes, Saturday, 16th Sept. 1775.

**I** Left St. Malo last Thursday seven-night, and lay at Hedé, a little town situate on the summit of a mountain, and commanding a most extensive prospect. I got to Rennes next morning. Here I had flattered myself with the pleasure of seeing the celebrated monsieur de la Châlotais, who, after having suffered all the punishments which despotism can inflict, is now returned to spend the little remainder of his days in his native province. I had very particular letters to introduce me to his acquaintance; but he was gone to his seat near Caradeuc, the preceding day. To the honour of his present majesty and the ministry, they have endeavoured to make him every compensation for the cruel indignities he met with under

der the late reign. The king has presented him with three hundred thousand livres, besides a pension. He is restored to his place of "Procureur general au parlement;" and his estate of Caradeuc is to be erected into a marquisate.

I staid near two days at Rennes. It is the honorary capital of Bretagne, because the states are assembled there; but like all cities destitute of commerce, is dull and poor. Several of the principal streets are however very handsome, as the conflagration in the year 1720, which almost reduced the whole place to ashes, obliged the inhabitants to rebuild them. In one of the squares, is a fine statue in bronze of Louis the fifteenth. It was erected by the province in 1744, soon after his recovery from that dangerous illness in Flanders, when he obtained the title of "Bien aime." Beneath the prince appears on one side Hegeya the goddess of health, with her serpent and patera; and on the other, is the genius of Bretagne, kneeling on one knee, in her countenance



countenance exultation and reverence finely marked. At the foot of the pedestal is an inscription in Latin, dictated by adulation and falsehood; I blushed as I read it, for the monarch to whom it was offered. He lived, like his predecessor, to see all these marks of public approbation cease; and, lost to greatness or glory in the arms of his mistresses, a dark cloud overshadowed the evening of a reign, which he had opened with some applause.

Rennes is situate on the little river Vilaine. It was anciently fortified very strongly; but the walls are now in ruins, and the fosse nearly filled up. The siege it sustained by Edward the third of England, and John of Guant his son, is celebrated in story. The English and Breton army consisted of forty thousand men; and yet, after having remained before it six months, was obliged to retire without success.

I arrived here on Monday last. This is a handsome city, and its situation is  
equally

equally advantageous and agreeable. Nantes is built on the easy declivity of a hill, descending on all sides to the river. The Loire itself may also vie with the Thames. Exactly opposite to the spot on which stands the town, it is divided into several channels, by a number of small islands, most of which are covered with elegant houses. The great quay is more than a mile in length; the buildings very superb, and chiefly erected since the late peace. As its commerce is every year increasing, the city is consequently in a state of continual improvement and advance in beauty. The Loire is notwithstanding very shallow; and all goods are brought up in large boats from Painbeuf, which is nine leagues distant, near the mouth of the river, and at which vessels of burden are obliged to stop. At the eastern extremity of the town stands the castle, in which the ancient dukes of Bretagne held their residence. It was erected about the year 1000; but the duke of Mercœur, who during the long wars of the League

League, rendered himself in some degree sovereign of the province, made several considerable additions to it. In the chapel, Anne, duchess of Bretagne, married Louis the twelfth in 1499; and by this second union, confirmed the duchy to the crown of France. They shewed me the chamber in which the Cardinal de Retz was confined, by order of Anne of Austria, and from which he made his escape by letting himself down by a rope into a boat, which waited for him on the Loire.

Many of the dukes of Bretagne are interred in the different churches of the city. The most splendid of all the monuments erected to their memory, is that of Francis the second, in whose person they terminated. It is in the "Eglise des Carmes," and was the offering of filial duty. His daughter Anne caused it to be constructed, while she was queen of France. Michael Columb, a Breton by birth, was the artist; and it must be confessed to be a "chef d'œuvre" in sculpture.



sculpture. The tomb is as magnificent as any of those in St. Dennis; and not content with this proof of her piety and attachment to his memory, she ordered her heart to be deposited within a golden box, in the same vault.—The inscription near the tomb, is very curious. It relates that Francis the second, after having been married seven years to his first wife without issue, as his last resource, made a vow to the Virgin, that if by her intercession or power, he obtained a child, he would dedicate to her an image of his own weight in gold. The holy Virgin, whether moved by the prodigious value of the present, or whether touched with pity, heard the prayer very favourably. The duke had a son, and performed his vow; though exigencies of state obliged him some years afterwards to retract the princely donation he had made.—By his second wife Margaret de Foix, he had the princess Anne.

Nantes was anciently, like almost every city in Europe, very strongly fortified. Peter de Dreux, one of their dukes, surrounded

rounded it with walls, which have only been demolished within these few years. The bridge is an object of curiosity. It is near a mile and a half in length, being continued across all the little islands in the Loire, from north to south. There are two other rivers considerably smaller, which unite at this city. One of them is called the Erdre. I went up it about two leagues yesterday, to a gentleman's Chateau, where I dined. The Meander, so famous in Grecian fable, can hardly exceed it in beauty. It winds between groves of chesnut, oak, and poplar, which cover the banks to the edge of the water, and which are only interrupted by vineyards, gardens, and elegant villas. About half way, are the ruins of a celebrated fortress possessed by the Hugonots, called the castle "de la Verriere," and at the distance of a mile from the house where I spent the day, is an ancient mansion embowered in woods, which belonged to Peter Landais, the famous and unworthy favourite of Francis the second.

Bretagne is by no means so fertile or cultivated a province as Normandy.

The interior part is chiefly open and healthy, but the sea-coasts are both more populous, and richer in the soil. Round this city, and to the southward, in the "Pays de Retz," vines are very numerous, and they make a thin, sour wine, known by the name of "Vin Nantois."

—If we compare the present condition of Bretagne, as constituting a part of the kingdom, with its ancient one, as an independent government, there can be no doubt that the change was the most salutary and happy to be conceived. While under the dominion of their native princes, the duchy was a scene of continual war, bloodshed, and devastation. The dukes of Normandy, or kings of France, were ever aiming at its reduction, and the former effected it more than once. The intestine commotions which were raised by the opposite pretensions of John de Montfort and Charles of Blois, in the fourteenth century, left the miserable country unpeopled, desolate



desolate, and a prey to the most severe famine. Louis the eleventh paved the way for its re-union to the crown. The lady of Beaujeu, left regent at his death, pursued her father's measures with vigour; and the narrow, parsimonious character and conduct of Henry the seventh, whose avarice prevented him from lending any effectual succour to Francis or his daughter, conspired to compleat this important acquisition.—I do not recollect many immortal or sublime spirits whom they have produced. Bertrand du Guesclin, Constable of France, so renowned in the wars of Edward the third and the Black Prince, was a native of Bretagne; and Abelard, Heloise's unhappy lover, too well known by his amours and his misfortunes, was born at a village called Le Palet, only ten or twelve miles from Nantes, near the borders of Poictou. He lived in the twelfth century, under Conan the third, duke of Bretagne.

The origin of Nantes is very uncertain. It is carried into remote antiquity. The

Romans doubtless had a station here. In the year 1580, among the ruins of a tower demolished at that time, was found a stone, which, by order of the magistrates, was transported, in 1606, to the "Hotel de Ville." The inscription on it has greatly exercised the attention of antiquaries. It is very legible, and in Roman characters. I transcribed it myself. This is it.

"Numinib: augustor:

"Deo: Vol: Jano.

"M: Gemel: Secundus. et C. Sedat: Florus.

"Actor: Vicanor. Portent. Tribunal. C. M.

"Locis ex Stipe conlata posuerunt.

I cannot forbear mentioning to you one other monument equally singular. Near a bridge which crosses the Loire, called "Le Pont de la belle Croix," is a stone fixed in the wall, with the remains of a decayed inscription. It was erected to mark the spot where Gilles Marechal de Retz was burnt, under the the reign of Charles the seventh, and, as I think, about the year 1440. This nobleman

nobleman was accused of, and condemned to die, for crimes, which were said to be so horrible and enormous, as to preclude mention. They were never divulged, but covered up under a veil of darkness and mystery. A very ingenious man, to whom I am indebted for almost all the information I have gained here, assured me that his trial is yet preserved among the archives of the city; but has never been opened, or even inspected into, from the same motives of horror and caution which actuated his judges. I must confess this appears to me very extraordinary.

The environs of Nantes are agreeable; and I should be tempted to make a longer stay here, if the advanced season did not compel me to hasten my journey.—I shall set out in two hours for La Rochelle. Whether I pursue my route to Bourdeaux, through Saintonge, or make an excursion by Poitiers and Angoulesme, I do not yet know; you shall hear of me as I proceed.

LETTER



## L E T T E R VI.

La Rochelle, Wednesday, 20th Sept. 1785.

**I** SLEPT at Aigrefeille last Saturday night, a little village on the confines of Bretagne, and breakfasted next morning at Montague, the first town in Poictou. I continued my journey the whole day through that province, and arrived, as the sun set, at Moreille. The evening was uncommonly beautiful, and I should have proceeded some miles farther if a very large convent, which stood opposite to the post-house, in one of the finest situations to be conceived, had not seemed to demand my attention. I ordered horses for the ensuing morning, and walked up to look at it. The great gates were open, and admitted me into a spacious court, or lawn in front of the building.

building. Here I met the Prior: he was a thin, spare figure, apparently past his fiftieth year, if his habit did not tend to deceive the judgment. He accosted me with extreme politeness; and on my informing him that I was a traveller, induced by curiosity to visit his convent, he conducted me into the church, and through the apartments. "We are," said he, "of the Cistercian order, and owe our foundation to Eleanor, queen of England, and wife to Henry the second: but during the unhappy wars of the League, the chief scene of which lay in this part of the kingdom, our archives were all carried away, and the building itself defaced, by the soldiery of Coligni."—When we had finished our view of it, he insisted on my company to supper. It was served up with great elegance, and followed by a desert from the gardens of the priory, which were very extensive. I staid till near midnight, and left my generous host with the utmost regret.

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I got to Marans, Monday morning. This is a miserable town, situate on the river Sevre, which divides Poictou from the " Pays d'Aunis." At a small distance from the place, on the bank of the river, towards its mouth, tradition yet points out the spot rendered celebrated by the interview of Louis the eleventh and his brother Charles duke of Guyenne. The artful monarch exhausted all the wiles of his treacherous and crooked policy to gain his brother, in vain; and their interview, like most others between princes, was attended with no beneficial effect.

It is only twenty miles from Marans to La Rochelle, through a rich country, covered with vines. This city, so famous in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the refuge of the Hugonots, and their grand barrier against the royal power—is still a commercial and populous place, though declined from its ancient lustre. The port though it does not admit vessels of any considerable burthen



then, is yet finely calculated for trade. It may be divided into three parts: the bason which is the innermost, is only a quarter of a mile in circumference; and at the entrance rise two very noble Gothic towers, called the "Tour de St. Nicolas," and the "Tour de la Chaine." They are now in a state of decay, but were anciently designed to protect the town and harbour. Without these, is the "Avant Port," extending more than a league, and bounded by two points of land, to the north and south. Beyond, is the road, where the largest ships usually anchor, protected from the southwest-winds by the islands of Re, Oleron, and Aix. Before the cession of Canada to the English, and of New Orleans to the crown of Spain, the trade of La Rochelle was very lucrative. It has again revived within these two last years, to the coast of Guinea, and the East Indies.

This place cannot lay claim to any remote antiquity. It was a little collection

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tion of houses on the shore, inhabited by fishermen, when William the ninth, last Count of Poictou, rendered himself master of it in 1139. He transmitted it to his only daughter Eleanor, who, after her divorce from Louis the seventh of France, brought all her ample dowry to Henry the second of England.

Louis transgressed every rule of true policy, in suffering so great a princess to carry her possessions into the family of his vassal, already too powerful. The charter of Eleanor, incorporating the town of La Rochelle, yet subsists, in the registers of the city. She granted them many privileges, which her son Richard the first afterwards confirmed. Under John, the English affairs declined; and though St. Louis, moved by scruples of honour and conscience, restored to Henry the third all Saintonge, and Aunis, yet his son, Philip the Bold, re-conquered them again some years after. The battle of Poitiers, under Edward the third, was followed by the surrender of all

all the adjoining provinces and cities. Rochelle constituted part of the dominions given to the Black prince by his father; but his reign was very short, and he lived to see them again re-united to France by Charles the fifth, in the latter years of Edward's reign.

The reformed religion, which was first introduced into the kingdom about 1540, met with a most favourable reception here; and this city became, under Charles the ninth, the grand asylum of the Protestants. The massacre of Paris was followed soon after by the memorable siege, which began in November 1572, and was raised in June 1573. Enthusiasm supplied the besieged with a constancy and courage, that rendered them superior to the assailants: and the Duke of Anjou, who commanded the royal army, was happy to find a pretext, in his election to the crown of Poland, for withdrawing his shattered troops, after having lost twenty-two thousand men before the place. This success conduced

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to inspire them with resolution to withstand Louis the thirteenth, in 1627; but Richlieu's daring genius was not to be awed into any submission. After having precluded every source of assistance by sea and land, and held it invested thirteen months, it surrendered to the royal clemency. The calamities which the garrison endured from famine, are only to be compared with those of Jerusalem under Titus, and perhaps even exceed them. It was the last effort of religious opposition, and the æra which established an unlimited regal power throughout the kingdom.

I went yesterday twice, to view the dyke so renowned, erected by Richlieu. When the sea retires, it is visible; and I walked out upon it above three hundred feet. It extends from side to side, across the harbour, nearly an English mile in length. Its breadth is, at this time, more than one hundred and fifty feet, and it widens continually towards the base. No monument of architecture, however  
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superb or beautiful, no production of elegance, however refined, can possibly impress the mind with so vast and sublime an idea of the genius of Richlieu, as does this bulwark against the sea. While I stood upon it, in the middle of the port, between the waves which rolled on either side, and contemplated its durability, extent, and strength, I was almost inclined to suppose this wondrous work superior to human power, and the production rather of a deity than of a mortal. A small opening, of about two hundred feet, was left to give entrance to vessels, and shut up by chains stretched across. A tower was likewise constructed at each end, no vestiges of which now remain. Neither Buckingham, or Lindsey, who were successively sent to the aid of the besieged by Charles the first, dared to attack this formidable barrier: they retired, and left La Rochelle to its fate. In all probability, the lapse of a thousand years, aided by storms, and all the fury of the sea, will make little or no impression on this dyke, which is de-

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signed

signed to endure as long as the Cardinal's fame, who dared to construct it.

From the northern point of the harbour, is a fine view of the three islands, Re, Oleron, and Aix. It was on the former that the duke of Buckingham landed, and, after his fruitless attempt on the citadel of St. Martin, was repulsed with the loss of eight thousand men. This island, which is only six leagues in length, is separated from the main land by a channel of three miles. It contains, I am assured, twenty thousand inhabitants, and is better cultivated than the finest province of France: while Oleron which is more than double its size, has not near that number of people, and is neither rich, or in the same state of improvement. This results from their different political situation, the island of Re being free, and exempt from all imposts or taxation.

On the southern side of the port stands a convent of Minims, erected by Louis the



the thirteenth, after the termination of the siege, in 1628, to pray for the souls of those who perished before La Rochelle. When Charles the ninth began to invest it, there were then seventy-two thousand persons in the city. In the second siege, they had diminished to twenty-eight thousand; and at present, the inhabitants are only between seventeen and eighteen thousand; of which scarce two thousand are Hugonots. — Religious animosity has entirely subsided: the citizens are accounted as loyal, as well attached to the crown, as any of France; and Louis the fifteenth permitted the inscriptions engraved on copper, and affixed by Richieu on either side the doors of the monastery I mentioned, to be taken down a few years since, solemnly broken, and thrown into the the sea. — I purpose to leave Rochelle to-morrow, and shall take the route of Rochfort and Saintes.

A gentleman with whom I supped last night assured me, that the family of d'Olbreuse exists still, and that they re-

side near Chateaufneuf, upon the Charente, in Angoumois. He added that their circumstances were narrow almost to distress. You will surely recollect, that this house is allied to the blood royal of England. George-William, the last duke of Zell, married Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse, at Breda, about the middle of the last century. They had only one daughter, the beautiful and unhappy Sophia, so well known for her misfortunes, and mother to his late majesty George the second.

The weather here is the most serene and delightful to be imagined. The vintage is already begun round the city; and the peasants are engaged in all that happy festivity natural to the season and the employment. I shall have the pleasure of seeing this scene continued to the foot of the Pyrenees, as they do not begin their vintage in Guyenne and Gascony till the middle or close of October.

This

THROUGH FRANCE.

This is a long historical letter. It is time to finish it, and subscribe myself, &c. &c.

IV. 2. 1. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.

LETTER

LETTER



This is a long and tedious journey, and is not to be undertaken without a great deal of preparation.

## LETTER VII.

Saintes, Sunday, the 24th Sept. 1775.

**T**HE distance from La Rochelle to Rochfort is seven leagues. The first four are exceedingly pleasant, the road lying along the sea-shore, and in view of the islands Oleron and Aix, which appear at a small distance. It is now almost a century since Louis the fourteenth constructed Rochfort. The city is built in the midst of marshes, which were drained for that purpose. Colbert was then prime minister, and it is said, he used to call it "La Ville d'Or," from the prodigious sums his master had expended in its erection. Time has, however, given the sanction of utility to the project, and rendered this port as necessary and important to the crown of France,

France, as either Brest or Toulon. It is situate on the Charente, about five leagues from its mouth. — I spent several hours, Friday morning, in the different magazines and dock-yards. Every thing appears to be under an admirable regulation; and the several branches of naval equipment are carried on with the utmost vigour and dispatch. It seems to be a grand object of attention with the present ministry to restore the navy, almost totally destroyed during the late war.

The number of workmen commonly employed at Rochfort is about nine hundred. To these are added six hundred galley slaves, who are occupied in the most painful and laborious parts of service. They are chained two and two with heavy fetters, constantly guarded, and kept in a long building, erected for that purpose, in the centre of the yard. Some of the wretches are thus kept for a term of years; others during life. The precautions used to prevent their escape are

are very excellent, dictated by great discernment, and improved on continually by experience—yet, in spite of every obstacle, they continually elude them.

The armoury, the rope-walks, the storehouses of every kind, are all in the best order, and kept with prodigious neatness. Louis the fourteenth fortified the city at the time he erected it; but its situation, at so considerable a distance from the sea, renders it sufficiently secure from any attack, and they have therefore lately closed up the battlements, and neglected the fosses. It is laid out with great beauty and elegance. The streets are all very broad and straight, traversing the whole place from side to side; but the buildings do not correspond to them in this respect as they are mostly low and irregular.

The province of Saintonge begins at a small distance from Rochfort; this city is the capital of it. The antiquities which Saintes yet presents, have chiefly detained me here since yesterday morning.



ing. It was a Roman colony, and those conquerors of the earth, who polished the nations they subdued, have left the traces of their magnificence behind them. In a hollow valley, between two mountains, and almost adjoining to one of the suburbs, are the ruins of the amphitheatre. Though now in the last stage of decay, its appearance is very august and venerable. In some parts, scarce any of the arches are to be seen; but the east end is still in a great degree of preservation. From its situation in a valley, and from the ruins of an aqueduct, which conveyed water to the town near three leagues, it has been supposed that Naumachia were represented in it; but this amounts only to conjecture. A triumphal arch, on which is an inscription in Roman letters, merits likewise attention. It was erected to Germanicus, on the news of his death, so universally lamented throughout the empire.

The river Charente surrounds this city, as the Severn does that of Shrewsbury, forming

forming a horse-shoe. I have been walking in the beautiful meadows which border it, and from whence the buildings of the town have a fine effect. Though the Charente cannot compare with the Loire or the Rhone in size and depth, yet the actions which have been performed on its banks, in different ages, will render it immortal in story. At Taillebourg, only six miles from hence, nearer to its mouth, was fought the battle between Henry the third of England, and St. Louis, where the latter was conqueror, and in which he gave proofs of undaunted prowess and intrepidity, in defending, almost alone, the passage of a bridge against the whole opposite army, during some minutes. Francis the first, the most amiable and accomplished prince who ever reigned in France, except Henry the fourth, was born at Cognac, only seven leagues higher up on the charente. Two leagues beyond Cognac, still nearer its source, is the famous plain of Jarnac, where the Hugonots were beat by the duke of Anjou,

Anjou, and where the great Louis, first prince of Condé, was assassinated by Montesquieu. I am told the Count de Jarnac has caused a monument to be erected within these few years over the spot where perished that unhappy prince. I intended fully to have gone along the banks of the Charente, through both these last-mentioned places, to Angoulesme; but the difficulties are insuperable. There is neither a post road, nor horses yet established, and I therefore pursue the straight route to Bourdeaux, through Pons and Blaye.

Except the remains of Roman grandeur yet visible at Saintes, the place contains very little to detain or amuse. It is built with great irregularity; the streets are narrow and winding; the houses mean, and almost all of them some centuries old. The cathedral has been repeatedly ravaged and destroyed by Normans and Hugonots, who made war alike on every monument of art or piety. One tower only escaped their rage, which is said to have been constructed as early as the

H

year



year eight hundred by Charlemagne. It is of enormous magnitude, both as to circumference and height. These qualities, superadded to its prodigious thickness and strength, have probably conducted to preserve it in the storms of war, more than any veneration for the memory of its founder, or regard to the sanctity of its institution.

The Reformed Religion seems far on the decline in this province, where anti-ently it had gained so many votaries. There is only one protestant family, as I am assured, in Saintes; the reason is evident; — the fervours of devotion, warm and animated in the beginning, are nourished by persecution, but unhappily become languid and extinct in an age of more mild and tolerating principles. Interest is ever present, ever intimately felt by mankind. The established Religion holds out offices and honours: Protestantism is barren. Her rewards are in another world. Can you wonder that it loses ground continually? Adieu!

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

Bordeaux, Friday, 7th Oct. 1775.

**I** Continued my journey from Saintes last Sunday se'nnight, and slept at Pons, a small town agreeably situate on a hill. Near the summit, in the centre of the place, is an antient chateau, belonging to the prince de Marsan; it commands an extensive and luxuriant prospect of the vales of Saintonge and Angoumois, covered with vines, and watered by two or three fine rivulets, which lose themselves, after many windings, in the Charente. I entered the province of Guyenne the ensuing day, and arrived at Blaye, on the bank of the Garonne, Tuesday morning. I put my carriage into a boat, and came up to this city by water; the distance is about seven leagues. At

Blaye, the river is about four miles in breadth, but it diminishes insensibly as one approaches Bourdeaux. Nearly half way between the two places, is the mouth of the Dordogne, which, after running through the Limosin and Perigord, empties itself into the Garonne. The prospect at the conflux of these two streams, is wonderfully picturesque. It is more cultivated and and pleasing, though less sublime and magnificent, than that at the junction of the vistula and the Nogat, near Marienbourg, in Polish Prussia.

Our passage from Blaye was long, and the sun declined as we turned round a point of land, which opened to us the city of Bourdeaux at the distance of three miles. The effect on the spectator is wonderfully august and striking. It describes the figure of a crescent more than a league in length, the buildings of which, near the water-side, are all modern, lofty, and very elegant. I have seen no coup d'œil so superb in Europe, except the view of Lisbon from the tower of Belem on the Tagus, which, though  
more



more irregular from the nature of its situation, is rather superior in magnificence.

The favourable impression which Bourdeaux cannot fail to make on a stranger at his arrival, is well confirmed by a residence in it. Pleasure seems to have as many votaries here as commerce; luxury and industry reign within the same walls, and that in the most extended degree. The air of courts is ever effeminate, seductive, and voluptuous. Commercial cities are usually marked by opposite manners, and the love of gain, powerful in its influence over the human heart, swallows up and absorbs the more soft and melting passions. Here, however, these rules are entirely controverted. Dissipation and debauchery are more openly patronized, and have made a more universal and apparent conquest, than in half the capitals of Europe. At Stockholm, scarce the shadow of them is perceivable. Neither Copenhagen nor St. Petersburg are yet advanced to the same point of excess, tho' aided by the presence of a sovereign, and the pleasures which

follow in their train. Hamburgh, though perhaps as large, as commercial, and as opulent as Bourdeaux, betrays no external marks of the dissolution of manners, and punishes them, when visible, with extreme severity. It is natural to seek for the reason of this extraordinary contrast. We shall find it, I apprehend, chiefly in the genius of the nation, gallant and amorous; in the spirit of the government, which rather encourages than represses the arts of luxury among all ranks of people. Devotion or superstition, the only engine capable of opposing the torrent, has ceased in France, where the Virgin is held in as little estimation as among us.—Divest mankind of the influence which religion, policy and decorum has over them—what restraint can be affixed to their licentious passions?

The ancient city of Bourdeaux, though considerable, was, what every other in Europe might be esteemed at the accession of Louis the fourteenth, ill built, badly paved, dangerous, nasty, without police or any of those regulations indispensable

penfibly requifite to conftitute a fplendid or elegant place. It has entirely changed its appearance within thefe laft thirty years. The public edifices are very noble, and all the ftreets newly conftituted are regular and handsome. I am never tired with walking on the banks of the Garonne. The quays are four miles in length, and the river itfelf is broader confiderably than the Thames at London bridge. On the oppofite fide, a range of hills, covered with woods, vineyards, churches, and villas, extends beyond the view.

Almost in the centre of the town, is a fine equeftrian ftatue in bronze, erected to the late king, in 1743. It is very rarely that I am much affected by the infcriptions under the figures of princes, ufually only a detail of virtues and qualities they never poffeffed. There is fomething fo pathetic and fimple, addreffed to the heart, and not defigned to dazzle, in this, that I have retained it in my memory,

“ Ludovico



“Ludovico quindecimo,

“Sæpe victori, semper pacificatori ;

“Suos omnes, quam late regnum patet

“Paterno pectore gerenti ;

“Suorum in animis penitus habet anti.”

The beauty of the river, and the fertility of the adjoining country were probably the causes which induced the Romans to lay the foundations of this city. The ruins of a very large amphitheatre yet remain, constructed under the emperor Gallienus; it is of brick, as are most of the edifices of that period, when the empire was verging to its fall, and the arts began to decline.

In the irruption of the barbarous nations, and peculiarly in those which the Normans repeatedly made, Bourdeaux was ravaged, burnt, and almost entirely destroyed. It only began to recover again under Henry the second of England, who having united it to the crown by his marriage with Eleanor, rebuilt it, and made it a principal object of his policy

licy, to restore it again to the lustre from which it had fallen.

The Black prince received all Guyenne, Gascony, and many inferior provinces, in full sovereignty from his father: he brought his royal captive to this city, after the battle of Poitiers. and held his court and residence here during eleven years. His exalted character, his uninterrupted series of good fortune, his victories, his modesty, his affability, and his munificence, drew strangers from every part of Europe; but all this splendour soon sunk into night. He lived to experience the ingratitude of the man to whom he had restored a kingdom; he became a prey to distempers in the vigour of life; he saw his dominions reunited again, in many of their branches, to the crown of France; he lost his eldest son, a prince of the highest expectations; and at length, overcome with sorrow at this last affliction, he quitted Bourdeaux, and re-embarked for England, to expire, a memorable example of the hasty revolution

hution of human greatness. In 1453, Charles the seventh re-entered it, and subjected the whole province, which had been near three centuries under the English government. Conscious of the importance of such a conquest, he ordered the "Chateau Trompette" to be constructed, to defend the passage of the river; and Louis the fourteenth employed the celebrated Vauban to erect a new fortress, in the modern style of military architecture, on the same spot.—Madame de Maintenon, whom fortune seemed to have chosen as the object of her extreamest rigour, and extreamest bounty, was removed from the prison of Niort in Poictou, where she was born, with her father the Baron d'Aubigné, to this castle, where she used to play with the daughter of the turnkey, in the extreamest indigence.

Bourdeaux presents few remains of antiquity. The cathedral appears to have been erected very early, and has suffered considerably during the lapse of centu-

ries.



ries since its construction. The unfortunate duke of Guyenne, brother to Louis the eleventh, lies buried before the high altar.—The adjacent country, more peculiarly the “Pays de Medoc,” which produces the finest claret, is exceedingly pleasant; and at this season, when the peasants are all engaged in the vintage, it is one of the most delicious landscapes in the world. My stay here will probably be some days longer. Meanwhile I remain, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER IX.

Ausich in Armagnac,  
Saturday, 14th October, 1775.

I Left Bourdeaux last Tuesday morning, and took the road to Agen, along the southern bank of the Garonne, through the Bourdelois. I crossed the river at Langon, a little town pleasantly situate on its banks, and stopped in the evening at La Reole. It was my intention to have proceeded farther, but the landlady was too eloquent; she offered to send her little boy, who would conduct me over the ruins of the castle, while she herself prepared a brace of partridges, and the finest desert in the world, against my return. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and walked out. The sun had  
set,

set, but the sky was without a cloud, and the air perfectly serene. The castle overhangs the waters of the Garonne, and is reflected in its surface: Time has crumbled many of the battlements into ruin, but enough yet remains to evince its former greatness. Catherine of Medicis resided in it some time, during one of the journies which she made into the southern provinces; and Henry the fourth, then only king of Navarre, had here an interview with her, when he became enamoured of the beautiful Mademoiselle d'Ayelle, one of her maids of honour.

I dined the ensuing day at Aiguillon. On the hill above the town stands the chateau of the celebrated duke d'Aiguillon, who has lived to experience the most cruel reverse of fortune; and, after having been the minister and the favourite of Louis the fifteenth, is now sentenced to spend the remainder of his days, an exile in his own palace, without power, and unaccompanied even with that compassion, which often waits on illustrious



trious persons in disgrace. He has been here already some months, happy, if royal vengeance pursue him no farther, and the stories of a Fouquet, or a Marechal d'Ancre are not again renewed in him.

I reached Agen in the afternoon. The country through which I passed from Langon, where I crossed the Garonne, to the gates of that city, is luxurious, and fertile beyond any I have seen in Europe. The hills are all covered with vineyards to the summit, and the vallies scarce require the industry of the peasants to produce in plenty, whatever is necessary to their subsistence. The climate at this time is delicious; no marks of winter appear in any of the productions of nature. Cherry trees, fig, acacia, poplar, and elms, are in full verdure: In many places, where they border the road on either side, the vines have run up, and mingled their clusters among the boughs: This is truly pastoral. Milton, in his divine imagination, could not employ our first parents  
in

in more delightful occupation, even in Paradise.——

“ Or they led the vine  
 “ To wed her elm ; she round about him throws  
 “ Her marriageable arms ; and with her brings  
 “ Her dower, th’ adopted clusters, to adorn  
 “ His barren leaves.”

In the midst of this charming country in a plain, close to the Garonne, stands the city of Agen. Behind it, to the north, rises a very high hill, called “Le Rocher de la belle Vue.” I went up to the top, where there is a convent. The chapel, and some of the adjoining cells are hollowed into the rock. It is said these excavations are very antient, and were made many centuries ago by solitaries or hermits, who retired here from motives of devotion and austerity. The prospect is enchanting, commanding over the Condomois, Agenois, and Armagnac ; beneath lies the city of Agen, and through the meadows which surround it, rolls the Garonne. A monk shewed me the appartments of the convent ;

vent; and in the recesses of the rock he led me to a spring, which is never dry, and which he assured me had been opened by a miracle, at the intercession of some holy recluse in ages past. Their little refectory was hung with portraits of the same heroes, among which was St. William duke of Aquitaine; and at the upper end, in golden letters, was written "Silentium."

Agen is a very mean and disagreeable place: The houses are inelegant, the streets narrow, crooked, and dirty. I saw only one building in it, which appeared deserving curiosity; it is a chapel belonging to a nunnery of Carmelites. The walls are exquisitely painted in *claro obscuro* and the deception of the roof, which is executed in the same manner, is one of the finest to be imagined. The high altar is magnificent, and adorned with a painting, the subject of which is very interesting. It is a nun, sinking under the transports of holy enjoyment. She appears incapable of supporting the divine effulgence



effulgence of her celestial lover, with eyes half closed, and arms expanded. Above, descends a radiant figure, with looks of tenderness and pleasure, surrounded with the glories of the skies, too strong for mortal sight. If it had not been a religious edifice, I should have supposed it to be the story of Jupiter and Semele, to which it bears the aptest resemblance. Near the piece is this inscription:

"Quid non conatur Amor!"

"Cœlos in Terris adumbrare

"Carmeli Filix tentarunt,

"Anno salutis

"1773"

Surely, you must here be struck with the justice of a remark we have often made together, on the intimate alliance between love and devotion; between the religious and amorous passion, when carried to an excess. The same enthusiasm, the same melting language, the same overpowering delights, are common to both. Love says Rousseau, in the extreme, borrows the language of

Devotion; and Devotion, in her flights, adopts the expressions of attachment and fondness.

We are used to apprehend the condition of a young woman who has taken the veil to be very miserable. Where convenience, or chagrin, or melancholy, are the motives to it, I fully coincide in that opinion; but there are, I doubt not, who in the gloom of a convent, amid shrines and crucifixes, are yet supremely happy. Married to a heavenly spouse, and dedicated to the embraces of a superior and invisible being, Enthusiasm has ample room to exert her powers, and raise her votary above the poor gratifications of earth.

"To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,  
"And melts in visions of eternal day."

But I return——

Agen has been fortified anciently, and the battlements and turrets yet remain almost entire round the whole place.

Margaret

Margaret of Valois, daughter of Henry the second of France, and wife to Henry the fourth, so renowned for her genius, her adventures, and her gallantries, kept her little court for some time at this city, during the civil wars which desolated France, and the quarrels which subsisted between her husband and brothers.——

The Agenois was part of the fine domain, which, by the peace of Bretigni, in 1360, was ceded to the crown of England, and constituted part of the territories governed by the Black Prince. It followed the fate of Guyenne under Charles the seventh, who re-conquered it from us.

I continued my journey from Agen, Thursday evening. At Layrac I once more crossed the Garonne. The passage is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, the river being very rapid, and running between high banks.—

I stopt a few hours yesterday morning at the city of Leytoure. As it is situate on a mountain, the access to which is very steep, I left my carriage below and



and walked up alone. Here, from the summit, I had the first view of the Pyrenees, at the distance of ninety miles; their heads lost in in clouds, and covered with eternal snow. While I stood gazing on these stupendous mountains, a gentleman very politely accosted me, and, seeing I was a stranger, offered me his services to shew me whatever curiosities the city contained.

“This place,” said he, “was a Roman colony, and called by them Lectoura. Many antiquities have been found here, and a beautiful fountain, which springs from the side of the hill, near the episcopal palace, is declared by immemorial tradition to have been consecrated to Diana, who had a temple near it. In succeeding ages, it belonged to the Counts of Armagnac, great vassals of the crown, and sovereign princes in their own territories. The last of these, John the fifth, was put to death in this city. His history was very singular. He began his reign

" reign in 1450. The youngest of his  
 " sisters, Isabella, was a princess of un-  
 " common beauty and accomplishments;  
 " the Count conceived a passion for her,  
 " and, unable to repress or extinguish it,  
 " he determined, in defiance of every  
 " obstacle, to make her his wife. He  
 " married her publicly. The reigning  
 " Pope, scandalised at this incestuous  
 " union, denounced against him a sen-  
 " tence of excommunicaton; and Charles  
 " the seventh, king of France, prepared  
 " to enforce it by the seizure of his do-  
 " minions. He sent the Dauphin, after-  
 " wards Louis the eleventh, into Ar-  
 " magnac, at the head of a body of  
 " forces. The unhappy Count, aban-  
 " doned by his subjects, and incapable  
 " of resistance, fled to Fontarabia, car-  
 " rying with him his beloved sister. At  
 " the intercession of the Count de Foix,  
 " he received his pardon, and was re-  
 " stored to his possessions. He returned,  
 " leaving the beautiful and unhappy  
 " Isabella in Spain, where she died in  
 " the utmost obscurity. — Louis the  
 " eleventh,

“eleventh, less generous and merciful  
“than his father, determined on the  
“Count’s destruction, from the desire  
“of uniting to the crown his ample fief.  
“He declared war against him, and in  
“1473 an army, under the command  
“of Peter de Beaujeu, was sent into  
“Armagnac. John the fifth retired to  
“Leytoure, where he was invested. He  
“capitulated on very honourable terms,  
“and on the most solemn promises of  
“being continued in his dominions.—  
“But while the treaty was on the  
“point of being signed, and the Count,  
“confiding in the honour of the King,  
“remitted his usual vigilance, the soldi-  
“ery broke into the town, and he was  
“himself murdered in his palace, some  
“vestiges of which are yet remaining.  
“Louis immediately seized on his pos-  
“sessions, as escheated to the crown.”

I listened to this affecting story with great attention. When the gentleman had concluded it, he conducted me to the brow of the mountain, where are still



still the remains of a castle. "In this  
 " fortress," said he, (renewing his dis-  
 " course) the noble and unfortunate  
 " Marechal de Montmorenci was con-  
 " fined, after the combat of Castlenau-  
 " dari, in 1632. So aimable was his  
 " character, so general the attachment  
 " borne to him, and so detested the  
 " Cardinal de Richleau his enemy, that  
 " the ladies of the place attempted by  
 " a stratagem to procure him his liberty.  
 " They sent him as a present, a large  
 " Pye, in which was concealed a silken  
 " ladder of ropes. He lost no time in  
 " endeavouring to profit of this instru-  
 " ment for his escape; and having fixed  
 " it, the same evening, to the window  
 " of his appartement, he ordered his  
 " valet to descend first, in the intetion  
 " of following him; but the servant hav-  
 " ing unfortunately missed his hold,  
 " fell, and broke his thigh. The centi-  
 " nels, alarmed at the cries he uttered,  
 " ran to the spot, and intercepted the  
 " Marechal. He was conducted to Tou-  
 " louse, and put to death."

My

My polite conductor quitted me, and I continued my walk.—— Leytoure occupies a level space of more than half a mile in circumference. The fortifications, in many parts, are yet entire; and the situation, admirably calculated for defence, was probably the motive which induced the Romans to fix their residence there.

I left Leytoure at noon, and arrived here last night, the distance being only five-and-twenty miles. This city is the capital of Armagnac. Like the last, it lies on the summit and declivity of a hill, which descends very rapidly on every side. Other hills rise at a small distance, and invest it round. Through the vale below runs a rivulet, called the Gers. The inhabitants are about six thousand; the buildings modern and elegant; the streets, though in general narrow, yet clean, and well paved. In the centre of the city stands the cathedral. It is one of the most magnificent in France,  
both

both as to construction and internal decorations. The painted windows are only inferior to those of Gouda in Holland. The chapels are of equal beauty, and adorned at a prodigious expence.

The revenues of the see, which is archiepiscopal, amount annually to three hundred thousand livres. The palace corresponds to these ample possessions, and is a very handsome structure. The apartments are furnished with a voluptuous splendour, rather becoming a temporal than a spiritual prince: and in the chamber where the archbishop himself sleeps, I could not help smiling at a number of holy relics, which he has disposed round a bed on which Heliogabalus might have reposed. The library is very ample, and adorned with some portraits. Among these, a fine head of the Cardinal de Polignac drew my attention. There is infinite genius marked in the countenance. A pale face; the contour oval; an aquiline nose, and an eye looking forward into futurity. Over

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the



the scarlet robe hangs the cross of the Holy Ghost, on his breast. He was archbishop of Auch, as they informed me.

The country thro' which I have passed, to the south of the Garonne, is much more hilly, or rather mountainous, than that on the other side. It is not, however, less fertile or agreeable. Though I am assured every article of life is more than doubled in price within these last ten years, yet this province is still one of the cheapest in the kingdom. The common wine is at present only five liards a bottle. Hares, partridges, and most kinds of game, are in vast abundance. Add to this, a happy climate, and a people polite and gay from natural disposition, and you'll allow that a man must be very spleetic, who would die here of ennui.

To-morrow I continue my journey to Tarbes, and Pau. Meanwhile I am, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

Orthez in Bearn,

Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1775.

**A**RMAGNAC is a hilly and romantic country, abounding in beautiful prospects, where the savage and the cultivated are finely blended. At Rabasteins, a little town, I entered the province of Bigorre, and got the same evening to Tarbes, which is the capital. My intention was to have visited Barege, so famous for its medicinal baths; but its situation in the midst of the pyrenees, where winter has already begun, and which are covered at this time with snow, has induced me to relinquish my design. I spent a day at Bagneres de Bigorre. This place is hardly less celebrated than the

the former. It is only about twelve miles distant from Tarbes, and the road lies through a rich vale, at the termination of which, immediately under the Pyrenean mountains, stands the town. It has been crowded with company during the summer, who are now forsaking it. Nothing can exceed the environs of Bagnères in beauty. Even at this season, when nature is declining in gaiety, and the leaves begin to take the hue of autumn, it yet retains a thousand charms. The Pyrenees which rise above it, and whose craggy summits are lost in clouds, form an object the most august and most magnificent to be imagined; while on the other side appear fertile vallies covered with vines, and interspersed with hamlets. There are many springs near Bagnères, both warm and cold, which issue out of the mountains, and are of different virtues. Those called "Les bains de salut," are the principal, about half a mile from the place, and the walk to which, between the hills is wondrously agreeable.

I cannot



I cannot but regret that the year is too far advanced to permit me to spend some weeks among the Pyrenees. An admirer of nature must find ample subject for investigation, and equal sources of delight, amid the various extraordinary scenes which present themselves in this chain of rocks, stretching from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. It would seem as if they were designed to form a barrier between France and Spain, which no union of blood or policy can ever effectually surmount, notwithstanding the celebrated words of Louis the fourteenth to his grandson, when ready to set out for Madrid—"Mon fils, il n'y a plus des Pyrenees."

I left Tarbes Wednesday last, and got to Pau in six hours, the distance not exceeding thirty miles. The province of Bearn begins about a league from Tarbes, at the ascent of a very steep and lofty hill, which divides it from Bigorre. The city of Pau will be for ever memorable in history,

history, since it was the birth-place of Henry the fourth. This immortal prince was born in the castle, then the residence of the kings of Navarre. You will not doubt that I visited it with equal pleasure and accuracy. It stands on one of the most romantick and singular spots I have ever seen, at the west end of the town, upon a rock which terminates perpendicular and abrupt. Below, runs the Gave, a river, or rather a torrent, that rises in the Pyrenees, and empties itself into the Adour. On the other side, about two miles off, is a ridge of hills, covered with vineyards, which produce the "Vin de Jorenoon," so much admired; and beyond all, at the distance of nine leagues, appear the Pyrenees themselves, covering the horizon from east to west, and bounding the prospect. The castle though now in a state of decay, is yet habitable; and the apartments are hung with tapestry, said to be the work of Jane queen of Navarre, and mother to Henry the fourth. Gaston the fourth, Count de Foix, who married Leonora, heiress of the crown of Navarre,

Navarre, began the edifice in 1464; but Henry d'Albret compleated and enlarged it, about the year 1519, when he made choice of Pau to reside in; and where, during the remainder of his reign, he held his little court.

In a chamber which by its size, was formerly a room of state, is a fine length portrait of that Jane whom I have just mentioned. Her dress resembles those in which our Elizabeth is usually depicted, and is very splendid. The head-dress is adorned with pearls; round her neck she wears a ruff, and her arms, which are likewise covered with pearls, are concealed quite to the wrist by her habit. At her waist hangs a miniature portrait by a chain. The fingers of her right hand play on the strings of a guitar; and in her left she holds an embroidered handkerchief. The painter has drawn her as young, yet not in the first bloom of youth. Her features are regular. It is a thin countenance, rather long; the eyes hazel, and the eye-brows finely arched.



arched. Her nose is well formed, though large; and her mouth pretty. She was a great princess; of high spirit, and undaunted magnanimity. Her memory is not cherished by the French, because she was the protectress of the Hugonots, and the friend of Coligni; but the actions of her life evince her merit.

In one of the adjoining chambers, is another portrait of Henry the fourth, as a boy; and on the second floor, is the apartment in which he was born. The particulars of his birth are in themselves so curious, and as relating to so great and good a prince, are so peculiarly interesting, that I doubt not you will forgive my enumerating them, even though you should have seen them elsewhere.—His mother Jane had already lost two sons, the duke de Beaumont, and the count de Marle. Henry d'Albret, her father, anxious to see an heir to his dominions, enjoined her, when she accompanied her husband, Anthony of Bourbon, to the wars of Picardy, if she became with-child,

to

to return to Pau, and lie-in, as he would himself superintend the education of the infant, from the moment of its birth. He threatened to disinherit her, if she failed to comply with this injunction. The princess, in obedience to the king's command, being in the ninth month of her pregnancy, quitted Compiègne in the end of November, traversed all France in fifteen days, and arrived at Pau, where she was delivered of a son, on the thirteenth of December, 1553. She was desirous to see her father's will, which he kept in a golden box; and he promised to put it into her hands, provided she admitted of his being present at her delivery, and would, during the pains of labour, sing a song in the Bearnois language. She had courage enough to perform this unusual request; and the king being called down on the news of her illness, she immediately sung a Bearnois song, beginning, "Notre Dame, du bout du pont, aidez moi en cette heure." As she finished it, Henry was born. The king instantly performed his promise, by giving her the box, together

ther with a golden chain, which he tied about her neck; and taking the infant into his own apartment, he began by making him swallow some drops of wine, and rubbing his lips with a root of garlic. The manner of his being brought up was similar, and almost unexampled in a prince. He was sent to the castle of Coarace in Bearn; where, without any regard to his quality, he used to run about with the children of the neighbouring peasants, barefooted and bareheaded, even in the severity of winter. This formed his body to fatigue and hardship; for the exercise of which he had no little occasion during his future life, in the long wars with Henry the third and the duke of Mayenne. They still shew a tortoiseshell which served him for a cradle, and is preserved on that account.

Several of the sovereigns of Navarre resided and died in the castle of Pau. Francois Phoebus who mounted the throne in 1471, expired here in 1483. He was only sixteen years of age, his mother being regent. The young king, who was passionately



passionately fond of music, having taken up a flute, had no sooner applied it to his mouth, than he felt himself struck with a poison so violent, that he died in two hours. This murder was attributed to Ferdinand of Arragon, a man whose character justified the worst imputations, and who seized on the kingdom soon after. Catherine de Foix succeeded her brother Francois Phoebus. She married John d'Albret; and was the last real queen of Navarre, only an empty title having remained to her successors. She died of grief for the loss of her dominions, which was chiefly caused by the incapacity and cowardice of her husband. Her reproach to him was very poignant; "Dom Jean," said she, "si nous fussions  
"nés, vous Catherine de Foix, et moi  
"Dom Jean d'Albret, nous n'aurions ja-  
"mais perdu la Navarre!"

Pau is a handsome city, well built, and contains near six thousand inhabitants. It is a modern place, having owed its formation

ation entirely to the castle, and the residence which the kings of Navarre made in it.

I pursued my journey this morning. The country from Pau to Orthez is mostly level, finely cultivated, and abounding in vines. The peasants speak a jargon unintelligible even to the French. Their dress too differs very much from those worn in Guyenne, and both that and their complexions bear a resemblance to the Spanish. — This place is a city and bishopric, but the meanest, I believe, in France. The cathedral is a wretched edifice, very barbarous, very ancient, and very ruinous. I expected to have found some monuments of the kings of Navarre in it; but have been disappointed. The remains of the castle are very noble. Its situation is fine, on a hill, commanding the town of Orthez, and a great extent of country. The people call it “Le Chateau de la Reine Jeanne,” because that queen resided in it, during many years, in preference to Pau. Some of the apartments,

apartments, though in ruins, may yet be entered. The princess Blanche, daughter to John king of Arragon and Navarre, was shut up, and died here. Her brother being dead, she became heiress to the crown; but her father having delivered her into the hands of her younger sister Leonora, countess of Foix, she confined her in the castle of Orthes, and after an imprisonment of two years, caused her to be poisoned in 1464.

History, from its earliest commencement to the present century, presents only a frightful picture of massacres, perfidies, and crimes, at which humanity recoils. We find ambition and subtlety almost always triumphant, while innocence, and the most amiable qualities, unless accompanied with vigour and capacity, usually conduct their unhappy possessors to violent or ignominious exits.—But I have done with reflections. It is late, and I set out to-morrow for Bayonne. Probably from thence, I may send you the conclusion of this letter.

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## L E T T E R X I.

Bayonne, Wednesday, 25th October, 1775.

**I** Continued my journey last Sunday morning. The Pays de Bearn is a fine country, abounding in acclivities, and industriously cultivated.

I arrived at this city in the afternoon. It is one of the most agreeably situate in France, at the conflux of two rivers, the Adour and the Nive. The first is scarce less considerable than the Thames opposite Lambeth, and across it is a wooden bridge, which joins the place to a suburb called "Le Fauxbourg du St. Esprit." The Nive, which is small, and rises in the Pyrenees, intersects the centre of the city, and

and resembles one of the canals in Holland. Advantageous as this situation appears for commerce, that of Bayonne is not only inconsiderable, but diminishes yearly. The entrance into the Adour, which is about four miles below the town, is rendered both difficult and hazardous from the sands which have collected, and form a bar across the mouth. Superadded to this inconvenience, the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux draws to it most of those articles of trade formerly exported from hence; and so rapidly have both the commerce and population declined, that the former is reduced to the shadow of what it once was, and the number of inhabitants has decreased within these last twelve years from twenty-one thousand to hardly ten thousand. It is notwithstanding a very agreeable place of residence, and furnishes in profusion all the requisites for human life. Wild fowl is in prodigious plenty, and the flavour exceedingly delicate. The sea and river supply excellent fish. The "Vin de Cap Breton," and the "Vin d'Anglet,"

which are made in the adjoining country, infinitely exceed the miserable claret drank all over this part of the kingdom, and are sold at eight sous a bottle. They are surrounded with woods, which render fuel one of the cheapest articles, and the climate itself is delicious, though the extreme vicinity of the Pyrenean mountains increases the cold in winter.

The buildings of the city are in general in an antique taste; and some of the streets, like those of La Rochelle, have porticos on either side; but the "Place de Grammont" on the bank of the Adour is adorned with very elegant modern houses, and public edifices. On an eminence in the midst of the town stands the cathedral. I could gain no other intelligence from the inhabitants respecting its construction, except that the English erected it during the time they were masters of Bayonne. It is a venerable pile; and, to judge from the style and ornaments of the various parts, cannot be older than 1350. I have made several



ral visits to it, in hopes of discovering some tombs or monuments of antiquity; but there is not any thing except the relics of St. Leo, who was put to death here in 907, and whose bones are preserved in a splendid shrine, over the high altar.

Bayonne though considered as a frontier place, is very ill fortified, the ramparts and fosses being equally neglected. On the north side of the Adour, Louis the fourteenth caused a citadel to be constructed by Vauban, on a hill which commands the town, and there are always about a thousand soldiers kept here in garrison. Till the year 1193, this city and a considerable territory round it was governed by its own Viscounts. The English rendered themselves masters of it under the reign of Richard the first, and retained the possession till 1451, when Charles the seventh's victorious arms annexed it to the crown of France. It has never since been retaken, though Philip the third and fourth of Spain made each an attempt upon it.

The common people are called, from the name of the province in which Bayonne is situate, "Basques." Their dress is peculiar to themselves. The women comb the hair up on the crown of their heads, and cover it with a sort of cap exactly resembling a little turban. This has no inelegant effect. The complexions of both sexes are darker considerably than in Guyenne, and they speak a jargon called the Basque, which has scarce any affinity either with the French, Spanish, or even the Gascon dialect.

I had some intention, before I arrived here, of visiting Pampelona, in the Spanish Navarre; but the advanced season, the Pyrenean mountains, which render it very difficult to pass even in the smallest two-wheeled carriage, and above all, the mortality among the cattle, which has reigned a considerable time in this and the adjoining provinces, are such insuperable obstacles as compel me to relinquish my design.

At

## THROUGH FRANCE. 115

At this city my journey to the southward terminates, and to-morrow I set out for Toulouse. I am under a necessity of taking the same route by which I came as far as Auch, there being no other post-road in this part of France. I shall write as I proceed. Adieu!

LETTER



## LETTER XII.

Toulouse, 8th November, 1775.

**T**HE country from Bayonne to the passage of the Adour, is heathy, woody, and sterile, neither well peopled nor cultivated in comparison with most parts of Bearn, and Bigorre. I got to Orthez in the evening. The sun had set, but after the finest day imaginable: I walked out, and prompted by a remaining curiosity to look once more at the ruins of the castle, I ascended the hill on which it stands, and spent a few minutes within the walls. The gloom of night began already to shade the chambers, and spread an awful melancholy through the whole edifice. As I passed out of the

the great gateway into the road on my return to the inn, an old peasant met me and with infinite simplicity assured me, that it was already past the hour when the inhabitants ventured into the castle, because the apparition of a princess who had been murdered in it, walked at night; and that he himself when young had seen and heard things very unusual, and very terrifying, in the great tower. This tradition of a murdered princess is certainly that of the unfortunate Blanche, whom I mentioned before; and was one of those catastrophes which naturally give birth among the credulous and superstitious multitude to tales of spectres, and all their train of horrors.

I dined at Pau, and passed some time in the "Parc d'Henri quatre." This is a beautiful wood, overhanging the Gave, and terminating at a point, from whence is an extensive and romantic prospect. As Henry, while he held his court in Bearn, was fond of this grove, it has retained his name.

I spent

I spent four days at Tarbes on my return. The town stands in the midst of a finely cultivated plain, but contains no objects of entertainment or instruction in itself.

Francis the first, at the marriage of his sister Margaret with Henry d'Albret, gave her the Armagnac and Bigorre as a dowry; and that celebrated princess, so well known for her genius and writings, died at the "Chateau d'Odos," only a league from Tarbes, in 1549.

I crossed all Armagnac to this city, and arrived here the third of November. Toulouse is the most disagreeable and ill built place I have seen in France. It is a vast labyrinth, composed of streets so crooked, narrow, and winding, that it requires a clue to conduct a stranger thro' them. No squares, or public places adorned with elegant buildings, as at Nantes or Bourdeaux, tho' it equals this last in size. I almost accuse myself for hav-  
ing



ing remained six days in a city, which presents scarce any thing to the eye or understanding; and where the imagination cannot even receive that pleasing sensation which results from visiting the spot where great actions have been performed in past ages. The annals of Toulouse are marked with little besides acts of cruelty or superstition; the death of a Montmorenci, and the execution of a Calas.

The cathedral is by no means a splendid pile of architecture. It was erected by Raymond the sixth about the year 1200. You will recollect that Languedoc was governed during several centuries by counts. Jane, the daughter and heiress of Raymond the seventh, was married to Alfonso, brother of Lewis the ninth, and by the death of these two princes, who expired within a few days of each other at Savona in Italy, immediately after St. Louis's miserable crusade and siege of Tunis, the county of Toulouse was united to the crown of France in 1271.

The

The tomb of Pibrac, whose name is so often mentioned under Henry the third, is in the church "de grands Augustins." This grave magistrate became amorous of the second Margaret, queen of Navarre, and sacrificed, as history declares, at the treaty of Nerac, his public duties to his attachment for that princess. In a history of this city which I procured on my arrival, a curious anecdote occurs relating to Margaret.——Catherine of Medicis, says the author, after the conference of Nerac, retired to Toulouse, carrying with her the queen of Navarre, who was tired of her husband and chagrined at his amours. The court, despairing of the queen of France's pregnancy, who had been married five years to Henry the third, was very desirous that Margaret might have children. Catherine her mother, ever addicted to astrology, having heard that there resided at Castelnau-dari, a woman famous for her skill in telling fortunes, and prying into futurity, went thither with her daughter to consult this

"Diseure

“Diseure de bonne aventure.” The princess was submitted in a state of nudity to the old woman’s inspection, who examined all the parts of her person with extreme accuracy, and particularly those on which her judgment must naturally depend. She then returned this plain answer to the queen, with certain medicines which she had composed, “Madame, “votre fille est d’une très bonne constitution et je me promets un bon succès “de mon remede, pourvu qu’elle puisse “gagner sur elle de se tenir *chaste*, tout le “tems qui est marqué dans le regime; “car j’apprends que vous êtes mere et “fille de grandes *coureuses*.” But Margaret, whose constitution was of the most amorous nature, found too great a difficulty in submitting to a prescription which precluded her those pleasures she loved; nor could the person consulted have found out any better means of preserving her credit, than by laying her royal patient under an injunction, which the knowledge she had of her cha-

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racter and complexion, rendered it very certain she would infringe.

Toulouse has some internal commerce by means of the famous canal cut to join the two seas, which opens into the Garonne just above the city, and conveys all the articles of trade from Cette to Bourdeaux, across Languedoc and Guyenne. This communication is however of little advantage to the place, which owes all its gaiety to the parliament, and the Provincial noblesse, who reside here in winter. I leave it this afternoon, and am meanwhile,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Beziers, Monday, 13th November, 1775.

**I** Quitted Toulouse last Thursday, and slept at Castlenaudari, which is near forty miles distant: It is a tolerable town, and situate on the royal canal. The Saracens who conquered this part of France during the decay of the empire, are said to have been its founders. About half a mile from it, in a hollow valley between two rising grounds, is the spot where the unfortunate duke of Montmorenci, covered with wounds, and thrown from his horse, was taken prisoner. I lamented as I stood on it, the fate of so good and amiable a prince. He was the Ruffel of France, who fell a sacrifice to the stern and unre-

lenting policy of Richlieu. The grandson of that Montmorenci, who expired in arms for the defence of the monarchy, at seventy-seven years of age; son to Henry d'Amville, constable under Henry the fourth; he himself of a character the most elevated, munificent, and benevolent; less guilty, even in his opposition to government, than Gaston duke of Orleans; and, though enemy of the minister, guiltless of rebellion against his sovereign.—How many circumstances to extenuate his crime! I cannot but regard this execution as one of those which tarnish in the highest degree the great name of Richlieu, and, amid all the splendor of his actions, force us to abhor the man.

It is about twenty-five miles from Castelnaudari to Carcassonne, where I staid the remainder of the day, Carcassonne consists of two distinct cities, separated by the little river Aude. The most ancient of these, called "La Haute ville," stands on the summit of a hill; the lower town which is in the plain, is of superior size, and both are surrounded with Gothic walls, battlements, and



and turrets, in the most perfect preservation. This place bore a considerable share in that celebrated crusade undertaken against the Albigeois in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which forms one of the most astonishing displays of superstition and gross barbarity to be found in the annals of the world.

During the reigns of the last kings of the Carlovingian race, when the royal power was nearly annihilated by their weakness, most of the cities in Languedoc erected themselves into little independent states, governed by their own princes. Carcassony was under the dominion of Viscounts. At the time when Pope Innocent the third patronized and commanded the commission of hostilities against these unhappy persons, Raymond, the reigning Viscount, was included in the number. Simon de Montfort, general of the army of the church, invested the city in 1209. Terrified at the fate of several other places where the most horrible massacres had been committed, the inhabitants demanded

manded to capitulate ; but this act of grace was only extended to them under a condition, equally cruel, unparalleled, and incredible, if the unanimous testimony of all the coteremporary writers did not force us to believe it. The people found in the place, were all obliged without distinction of rank or sex, to go out perfectly naked ; Agnez the Viscountess, was not exempted tho' young and beautiful, from this ignominious and shocking punishment.

“ On les fit sortir tout nuds de la Ville de  
“ Carcassonne (says an ancient author)  
“ afin qu'ils receussent de la honte, en  
“ montrant ces parties du corps que la  
“ pureté de la langue n'exprime point,  
“ desquelles ils avoient abusé et s'en  
“ étoient servis dans des crimes execra-  
“ bles.” It seems by this, that the Albi-  
geois were accused by their enemies of  
some enormities, probably feigned ; and  
similar to those which religious enmity  
and prejudice has attributed to the fol-  
lowers of Zinzendorf in the present cen-  
tury.

I continued

I continued my journey Saturday to Narbonne; the country from Toulouse to the gates of that city is very unpleasant; it is a plain, open, naked, and in many parts, barren; scarce a tree is to be seen, except olives, and those neither large nor numerous. On one hand appear the Pyrenees at a considerable distance; and on the other, the chain of rocks, called the Black Mountains, which divide Languedoc from the province of Rouergue. The weather was cold, and I found it difficult to procure a miserable fire made of vine twigs and roots of olives. The population is very thin likewise, and the appearance of every thing bleak and inhospitable. I went about a league out of the road near Carcassonne, to a little town called Trebé, where the canal passes over the river Aude, and got to Narbonne in the afternoon.

I must own I was infinitely disappointed in that city, which retains scarce any vestiges of its ancient grandeur. Narbonne, which pretends to the most remote antiquity



quity under the Celtic kings, in ages previous to the Roman conquests; which under these latter masters, gave its name to all the "Gallia Narbonensis," and was a colony of the first consideration, is now dwindled to a wretched, solitary town, containing scarce eight thousand persons, of whom three-fourths are priests and women. The streets and buildings are mean and ruinous: It has a communication with the Mediterranean, from which it is about three leagues distant, by a small river which intersects the place; but their commerce is very limited, and chiefly consists in some grain which they export to Cette and Marseilles. No marks remain of Roman magnificence, except several inscriptions in different parts of the city; and if the churches did not keep employed some hundred ecclesiastics, who are occupied in the salutary and beneficial duties of chanting requiems and vespers, it would probably cease in a few years to exist at all.

The See is said to have been founded by Charlemagne, but the present cathedral

dral is much more modern; only the choir remains, which is in the finest style of the Gothic edifices. In the center, before the high altar, is the tomb of Philip the Bold. It is composed of white marble: The king is represented in an extended posture, his head reposing on a cushion powdered with fleurs de lis. The face is that of a man in the prime of life, the features regular and pleasing; he has a beard on the upper lip and chin, and his hair floats in great quantity on his neck. In his right hand is the dalmatique, resembling a pastoral staff, and in the left he holds a sceptre, and the scales of justice. He has a regal crown on his head, and his feet rest on a lion. Behind in the old black letter, is this inscription.

"Sepultura bonæ Memoriz

"Philippi,

"quondam Francorum Regis,

"Filii beati Ludovici,

"qui Perpignani calida Febre

"ab hac Luce migravit,

"3 Non: Octobris,

"Anno Dni 1285."

You

You may perhaps recollect that Philip died at forty-five years of age, on his return from an ill concerted and unfortunate expedition against the king of Arragon. The body was brought here from Perpignan, and the bones having been separated by boiling water from the flesh, were carried to St. Denis and interred there.

The distance from Narbonne to this city is twenty miles. The mountain of Malpas, which was cut through, to admit the passage of the royal Canal, lies only a mile out of the road. It was impossible to pass so extraordinary a work without visiting it. The effect produced on the spectator is sublime in the highest degree: A large flight of steps at either end, permits gratifying curiosity by the minutest survey of it. I descended into the excavation, and walked through the mountain along the side of the canal. The length of it, is exactly two hundred and ten paces, or more than six hundred feet; and



and the perpendicular height from the water to the surface of the incumbent earth, is two hundred and two feet. A great part of the mountain has been vaulted at a vast expence, in the apprehension of its falling, from the prodigious weight; and the annual repairs necessary to it amount to a large sum. The breadth of the canal itself is at least twenty feet; and though the distance hollowed through the ground is so considerable, yet the light is perfectly admitted. This was the greatest obstacle to the completion of the junction of the two seas; and its execution has immortalized the famous Riquet, whom Louis the fourteenth employed in the enterprize. He was made Count de Caraman, and his descendants yet enjoy the title.

I arrived here last night. Beziers is an opulent and considerable city, containing above twenty thousand inhabitants, and situated in a delicious country. It covers all the sides of a very steep and lofty hill, on the highest point of which is built the cathedral.

cathedral. At the foot rolls the river Orbe. The prospect is extensive and beautiful, bounded to the north by mountains, and terminated on the south by the Mediterranean. It is accounted one of the most plentiful and eligible places of residence in the kingdom, all the necessities and elegancies of the table being procurable, and at the most moderate prices.

Beziers is said to have been a "Statio Romana," and used by them as a place of arms. The siege was one of the most memorable and bloody which happened during the crusade against the Albigenes. The garrison defended it with determined bravery; and every other means being unequal to their reduction, it was resolved to storm it. The papal Nuncio, assisted by Gusman the Spaniard, better known under the name of St. Dominic, exhorted the troops to behave with courage in this pious enterprize, and promised them remission from all their past offences. After a long and obstinate struggle, the city was entered by the victorious

torious soldiery, who massacred, in cold blood, sixty thousand of the wretched inhabitants, without distinction of sex, rank, or age, and afterwards reduced it to ashes. I leave it to your own generous and feeling mind, to make the natural reflections on this horrid catastrophe. I fear to permit myself to comment on such an event, to which there are but too many similar in the history of the Romish church. The form of that religion is doubtless unhappy and destructive to the human race, which nourishes in its essence the seeds of theological controversy, and metaphysical subtleties; which, though contemptible in themselves, necessarily produce that spirit of intoleration and persecution, that uniform experience proves to be the certain consequence of a difference in opinion on sacred subjects. Happy the Romans and the Greeks, who established no crusades to convert the provinces they subdued! who massacred no people for their adherence to the superstition of their ancestors, who knew no points of scholastic or polemical divinity;

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but



but with open arms, received the gods of the conquered nations, and admitted Isis, and the dog Anubis, to a place in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus!

Edward the Black Prince laid siege to Beziers in 1355, but without success. He ravaged all this part of Languedoc, and advanced even as far as Fabrignes, a little town at two leagues distant from Montpellier. There he halted; and whether from an apprehension of being intercepted in his retreat, or his army being fatiated with booty, began his march back. He burnt the suburbs of Narbonne and Carcassonne on his way, spread terror through all the neighbouring provinces, and brought his soldiers in triumph to Bourdeaux, laden with spoils.

The cathedral contains nothing remarkable, except the tomb of Blanche of France. Philip of Valois, her father, became enamoured, at the age of fifty-six, of Blanche d'Evreux, the most beautiful princess in Europe. She was only sixteen years

years old; but this disproportion did not prevent the nuptials. The King enjoyed his bride a very short time; he died the ensuing year, of the same disease which proved fatal to Louis the twelfth, and to Don John, son to Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain. The queen was left with child, and lay in some months afterwards of the princess Blanche. When she had attained her twentieth year, she was betrothed to the Count of Barcelona, and died at this city, on her journey into Catalonia.

I leave Beziers this afternoon. Meanwhile, adieu!

## L E T T E R XIV.

Tarascon on the Rhone,  
Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1775.

**M**ONTPELIER is a delicious place of residence. I staid there four days, and quitted it with extreme regret. The town itself is by no means handsome, the streets being almost all narrow, and badly laid out; but Nature seems to have chosen the hill on which it stands, to enrich with her choicest favours. The ascent is easy and gradual on every side; and the states of Languedoc have ornamented the summit of it at a vast expence, in a manner where taste and magnificence are equally blended.

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The prospect from this happy spot I cannot describe, though I studied it every day with an enthusiastic pleasure. Raphael's pencil, or Lorraine's, might paint it, but even Shakspeare's colouring must do injustice to its beauties. The vales of Languedoc, covered with olives, or laid out in vineyards, are contrasted with rude rocks to the north, and die away into the sea to the south. Though winter has almost stripped the trees of their verdure, there is nothing melancholy or desert which presents itself to the eye. A sky serene and unclouded, an invigorating sun, a keen and wholesome air, spread a gaiety over November itself, which here is neither accompanied with fogs nor rain. Montpellier has notwithstanding lost, within these thirty years, that vogue which conduces more to the support of a place, than any real advantages it may possess in point of salubrity; and the number of strangers who visit it from that motive is diminished annually. Some trade is still carried on by a small

river, called the Les, which empties itself into the sea, about a league off; but the Mediterranean has been retiring these three centuries from the whole coast of Languedoc and Provence. Frejus, between Toulon and Antibes, where the Emperor Augustus laid up his gallies after the battle of Actium, is now an inland city.

You doubtless remember the celebrated interview of Charles the fifth and Francis the first at Aigues-mortes. It is at present half a league from the shore, and has, of consequence, lost all its ancient commerce, which was very extensive. This event, which took place early in the last century, induced the Cardinal de Richlieu, ever attentive to the grandeur and emolument of the state, to construct a port at Agde, which he effected. The remedy was only temporary, as the cause still subsisted; and before the year 1670 Agde was rendered almost useless. Colbert then undertook to build the town of Cette, at which place all the commodities brought

brought down the royal canal might be exported, and the province of Languedoc supplied with a port, of which otherwise it is totally destitute. A gentleman here has assured me, that the necessity alone of having a maritime town at the mouth of the canal, has hitherto prevented Cette from sharing the fate of its predecessors, as the annual expence of clearing the harbour amounts to a hundred thousand livres; and even these precautions cannot hinder the sand from obstructing the entrance, and forming a bar across it, in a series of years. Montpellier owes its chief elevation to this very circumstance. The episcopal see was originally at Maguelonne, a place on the sea-shore; but which declining, from the retreat of the water, Pope Paul the third transferred it there, in 1536.

It is a garden from Montpellier to Nismes, flat, and every where cultivated. The peasants are just beginning to gather their olives, which are amazingly numerous, and the trees planted with the same regularity



regularity as the orchards in England. I cannot but envy the inhabitants of this genial climate, and these fertile plains, and am ready to accuse Nature of partiality in the infinite difference she has put between the Languedocian and the Swedish peasant. In vain will you tell me the "*Amor Patriæ*," the attachment we bear to that country where we were born, renders them equally happy, and obliterates or extinguishes all other distinctions. I know the force of this principle; I feel it in my own bosom; I cultivate it with the greatest ardour—but it cannot blind me to the infinite superiority which certain regions of the earth are endowed with above the rest.

I spent three days at Nîmes in the survey of those magnificent and beautiful remains of the Roman greatness which yet subsist. They have been described a thousand times; and it is not my intention to trouble you with a repetition of them. The Amphitheatre, and the "*maison quarrée*," are known through every

every kingdom of Europe. The first impresses with the deepest veneration; the latter excites the most elegant and refined delight. Indignation against the barbarians, who could violate and deface these glorious productions of antiquity, will mingle with the sensations of every beholder. One can scarce believe that Charles Martel, from hatred to the Roman name, had the savage fury to fill the corridors of the amphitheatre with wood, to which he set fire, with the intention to injure, though it surpassed his power to demolish, so vast an edifice. Yet even in despite of these attempts of barbarous nations, of the lapse of so many ages, and inclemency of elements, its appearance at this time is the most august which can be presented to the mind. The prodigious circumference, the solidity and durability of its construction, the awful majesty of so vast a pile, half perfect, half in ruin, impress with a tumult of sentiments hard to be transfused by any description. "The maison carrée," is in far superior preservation. It appears to me to be the most perfect

perfect piece of architecture in the world. The order is the Corinthian, and all the laboured beauties of that style seem to be exhausted in its construction. I blush for the bigotry and mean superstition which has converted this superb temple into a chapel of the Virgin, decked out with crucifixes, gilding, and Catholic pageantry.

At a quarter of a mile from the town of Nîmes, is another temple, far gone in a state of decay. Immemorial tradition declares that it was consecrated to Diana; but it is generally supposed to have been sacred to the "Dii infernales," as it is apparent that no light was admitted into it. In the inside, are numbers of mutilated statues, marbles, capitals, and inscriptions, which have been found from time to time. Close to it, rises a fountain, which may vie with that of Vaucluse in beauty, though not in fame. It is of a prodigious size, and never diminishes in the longest droughts. As the channel through which it flows had become obstructed in  
a series



a series of ages by sand and gravel, the inhabitants of the city undertook some years ago to clean and renew it. In the course of this work, they discovered a number of Roman coins, rings and other antiquities, several of which are highly preserved, and exceedingly rare. On the summit of the rock from whence issues the fountain, stands a building which has much exercised the opinions of the learned. It is Roman, and vulgarly called "La Tour magne." Its exposed situation has peculiarly conduced to hasten its decay. At what time it was erected, or to what purposes it served, are now equally unknown.

Nismes is an ill built and disagreeable place, containing in itself nothing extraordinary or remarkable. A hundred fables are related concerning its origin, which is carried into times anterior by many centuries to the Roman conquests. It probably does not occupy at present the fourth part of the ground on which it formerly stood. I left it at two o'clock this afternoon.

afternoon. The distance is only twenty miles; but the wind blew such a hurricane, as I scarce ever remember. The passage across the Rhone, which divides Provence from Languedoc at this place, is over a bridge of boats; and I own I passed it with some apprehensions, as they assure me it is not uncommon for carriages to be carried over into the river by a violent gust of wind.

The view of the Rhone is very picturesque. On one side, in Languedoc, stands Beaucaire, a considerable town, with a ruined castle overhanging a rock: on this is situate Tarascon, with a correspondent castle, much more considerable, and washed by the waves. The river is far broader than the Thames at London.

To-morrow, I proceed for Aix and Marseilles. Farewell!

L E T T E R

LETTER XV.

Marseilles, 5th January, 1776.

I Scarce ever remember in our northern climate, a colder day than that on which I continued my journey from Tarascon to this city. Winter seemed to have taken possession of the face of nature before its time. The olive trees were covered with snow, which fell very fast, and the Bize which blew in my face, and came from the summit of the Alps, rendered the weather extremely severe.—At St. Remi, a little town only four leagues from Tarascon, I drove about a mile out of the road, to see the remains of Marius's trophies over the Cimbri and Teutones. Though so many ages have rolled on since  
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their construction, they yet forcibly recall the idea of Rome, the conqueror of the earth.

It was night when I arrived at Aix, where I staid three days. The city has that air of silence and gloom so commonly characteristic of places devoid either of commerce or industry, and forms a most striking contrast to Marseilles, where opulence and population are universally visible. The warm springs which render it celebrated, induced Sextius Calvinus to found a Roman colony there, to which he gave the name of "Aquæ Sextiæ." They were supposed, probably with reason, to possess particular virtues in cases of impotence or debility; and several altars have been dug up sacred to Priapus, the inscriptions on which indicate their gratitude to that Deity for his apprehended succour and assistance. I saw nothing in the cathedral deserving attention, except the tomb of Charles of Anjou, last of the great Angevin line, king of Naples, and Counts of Provence. He died, if I recollect right,  
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in 1483, and left both his actual and pretended dominions to Louis the eleventh, king of France. The latter claims on the Neapolitan crown were the foundation of those long and unhappy wars begun by Charles the eighth, and perpetuated under his successor.

It is only twenty miles from Aix to this city.—There is notwithstanding, a considerable difference in the climate of Marseilles, which is rendered milder in winter, and cooler during the heats of summer, from its vicinity to the Mediterranean. Nature seems eminently to have marked out the place for commerce, by the advantages she has bestowed on it. The entrance of the harbour, which is extremely narrow, and surrounded by lofty mountains, shelters and protects the vessels during the most violent storms. The port itself forms a delightful walk at this season of the year, as it is open to the southern sun, and crowded with an assemblage not only of all the European nations, but of Turks, Greeks, and na-

tives of the coast of Barbary. The "coup d'œil" is one of the most agreeable to be imagined, if the chains of the galley slaves, heard among the hum of business, did not tincture it with the hateful idea of slavery. The gallies themselves useless and neglected, rot peaceably in their respective stations; and it is said, that no others will ever be constructed, to supply their place, as they have long ceased to be of an utility to the state, and are scarcely navigable in severe weather.

In the short residence I have made, I am yet forcibly struck with the wide deference, and almost absolute dissimilarity in the genius of the Provencaux, from that generally attributed to the French. The common people have a brutality and rudeness of manners more characteristic of a republican, than a monarchical and absolute government. Their language, so famous in ancient romance, is a corrupt Italian, more intelligible to a Neapolitan than a Parisian. The women are lively, beautiful, and disposed from complexion



plexion to gallantry. A fire, an extreme vivacity unknown to all the northern nations, and which results from a penetrating air, a genial sun, and skies for ever blue, is eminently discernible in their eyes, their conversation, the peculiar dances and music of the country, in all which a warm and impassioned animation forms the predominant quality. I fear to express how many charms there are in this gaiety of character and disposition, lest you should think I mean to contrast it with the etiquette of our own kingdom, where we seldom allow the heart to act uninfluenced by the judgment, or banish reflection and philosophy from the scene of elegant dissipation.

Marseilles pretends to remote antiquity. A colony of Phocians, in ages unknown, is said to have given it birth. The old city is one of the most nasty and ill built in Europe. I have never had courage enough to penetrate into its recesses, which are insupportably filthy. The modern Marseilles has sprung up since the com-

incommencement of the eighteenth century, and has all that regularity, elegance, and convenience, which distinguish the present time. I am inclined to consider it as one of the most eligible places of winter residence in the world, and far superior, where health is not an object of attention, to Nice or Montpellier. In the carnival, I am assured, it is uncommonly gay. The surrounding country is rocky and barren, but covered for several miles, on all sides, with villas and summer houses, which commerce has erected.

My intention of visiting Corsica and Sardinia I have relinquished, on account of the barbarism in which both those islands are plunged, and the few objects of entertainment or information they offer to a liberal mind. I have determined to remain here till the ensuing spring, when I shall probably return through the inland Provinces to England. Meanwhile, I remain, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER XVI.

Clermont in Auvergne,  
Friday, 26th of April, 1776.

**A**FTER a silence of near four months, I again resume my pen from among the mountains of Auvergne, at the distance of more than a hundred leagues from Marseilles. I have exchanged the delicious climate of Provence, its warm sun, and the shore of the Mediterranean, for a very different scene.

I quitted Marseilles on the sixth of this month, and got to Avignon the evening of the ensuing day. It was impossible not to dedicate some time to the view of a city so renowned in past ages, the seat of the



the sovereign Pontiffs during more than half a century, the residence of a Petrarch, and the birth-place of Laura. I felt that pleasure which results to every reflective mind, from the consciousness of being on the spot immortalized by poetry, genius, or great achievements. I compared Avignon as it now exists, with the picture which Petrarch has drawn of it in his writings, and attempted to ascertain the situation of his mistress's abode, which tradition yet points out in one of the suburbs. I went to the church of the Cordeliers, where rest her remains. In a little dark chapel, on the right hand, now disused for religious ceremonies, damp, cold, and unwholesome, beneath the arch which forms the entrance, and under a plain stone, lies that Laura, once so beautiful, and who can never die, while her lover's fame and productions survive. Round the stone are some ancient Gothic characters, covered with dirt, and rendered illegible by time. You will perhaps recollect that Francis the first, the most accomplished prince who ever reigned in France,

France, and who eminently possessed that enthusiasm which usually distinguishes and characterises genius, caused the tomb to be opened in his own presence. His wish to pierce the obscurity in which Petrarch has affected to involve the name of his mistress, and his own unhappy passion: A desire to ascertain by some incontestable mark the burial-place of Laura, were the motives which influenced him. Some small human bones, supposed to be her's, and a leaden box, containing a scrawl of Italian verses, obscurely disclosing Petrarch's attachment to her, were all which repaid the monarch's curiosity. I doubt not it is needless to remind you, that Laura died of the plague, which desolated all Europe in 1347 and the following year, and of which Boccace has drawn the most animated, terrifying, and distressful picture, which can be held up to the imagination of man.

It seems impossible to recognize the situation or adjacent country of Avignon, as they exist at present, in the melancholy colours

colours with which Petrarch has shaded them. The fertile plain of the "Comtat Venaisin," in which it stands, the rich banks of the Rhone are described by him as a frightful desert, through which pours a river infested by continual wind and tempests. Ovid has given us the same horrible idea of the coast of the Black Sea, a climate, incontestably one of the finest upon earth, and blessed with an almost continual spring. The gloomy medium through which the two poets beheld every object, explains this extraordinary enigma. The latter, only occupied with the painful recollection of the luxurious pleasures which reigned in the court of Augustus, and from which he was for ever banished, was dead to every sense of joy or delight. Petrarch an exile from his native country, ever cherishing the fond idea of revisiting Florence, and despising the manners, while he detested the city of Avignon, knew no bounds to his exclamations and complaints. Neither the distinguished favour of several succeeding Popes, with which he was honoured, nor the consideration



deration of its being the spot which gave his mistress birth, could soften or diminish the acrimony of his hatred to it.—For me, who viewed it impartially, and divested of prejudice, I was charmed with the situation. The view from the summit of the rock in the centre of the city, is delicious. The Bize indeed incommoded me extremely; but I comforted myself, that though piercing, it was yet wholesome; and that if Louis the eleventh, in a state of debility, had ordered intercessions to Heaven to avert it, Augustus, on the other hand, was so well convinced of its salubrious and invigorating qualities, that he erected an altar to it, and ordered it to be placed among the Gods.

The Rhone itself is a noble object, rolling rapidly through meadows covered with olive-trees, and divided into two channels opposite to Avignon. Across it extend the ruinous and decayed arches of that bridge, against which Madame de Grignan was so near being lost, and of which Madame de Sevigné makes frightful mention.

tion. It was demolished in 1699, by one of the inundations common to the Rhone. When entire, it was not less than a quarter of a mile in length; but its extreme narrowness, which did not permit two carriages to pass in any part, had almost rendered it previously useless; and motives of policy prevent the erection of a new one, as Avignon still belongs to the papal see. — On the farther side, in Languedoc, stands Ville Neuve, a considerable town, with a magnificent monastery of Benedictines, on a rock correspondent to that where is built the cathedral of Avignon. The high mountain of Ventoux en Dauphiné, covered with snow, and which Petrarch has described, appears to the north, and the savage rocks of Vaucluse bound the view to the eastward, at the distance of fifteen miles. Beneath spreads a lovely vale, watered by several rivulets, which lose themselves in the Rhone, and cultivated with the most laborious industry.

The city itself is, in general, ill built, irregular, and devoid of beauty; but the Gothic

Gothic walls and ramparts, with which it has been surrounded by different pontiffs, remain in high-preservation. I recollect none so perfect in any part of France. Several popes and antipopes repose in the churches of the place; and in that of the Cordeliers, almost opposite to Laura's, is the tomb of Grillon, so well famed for his gallant and invincible courage, for his loyal and unshaken attachment to Henry the fourth.

You will not doubt that I visited the fountain of Vaucluse, immortalized by Petrarch, and to which he so often retired to indulge his grief and hopeless love. I did so; nor is the lively impression it made on my imagination in any degree erased. It is only five leagues distant from Avignon, and, as I set out early in the morning, I reached the entrance of the valley about ten o'clock. I got out of the carriage, and walked slowly along the banks of the Sorgue, for so the river is called, formed by the fountain. Meadows of the most vivid green cover either side of it, over which

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rise abrupt and lofty rocks, which seem designed to seclude it from human view. The valley becomes more and more narrow toward the extremity, and winding continually, describes the figure of a horse-shoe. The view is at length terminated by an enormous mass of rock, forming a barrier across it, of a prodigious height, and absolutely perpendicular. Through its vast recesses run the streams which supply the fountain; and at its foot appears a basin of water, several hundred feet in circumference, stretched like a sheet, silent and quiet. The sides descend with great rapidity, and it is said, that in the middle no bottom is discoverable, though it has been often attempted — a circumstance probably resulting from the violence with which the springs bubble up, which prevent any weight let down into it from descending beyond a certain depth. — Tho' clearer in itself than crystal, yet the incumbent rock casts a continual shade, approaching to black over its surface. The water escaping from this state of inaction by a narrow passage, is immediately

diately precipitated in a cascade down a rocky channel, where it foams over a number of vast, detached stones, which intercept and impede its progress. They are covered with a deep green moss of many ages, and have probably tumbled from the mountains which overhang the torrent. The rocks themselves, which surround and invest this romantic spot, are worn by time, and the inclemency of elements, into a thousand extraordinary forms, to which fancy attaches shape and figure. On one of the pointed extremities, in a situation which appears almost inaccessible, are beheld the remains of an ancient castle, projecting over the water. It completes the wondrous scene, and leaves scarce any picturesque object wanting, which could have been presented to the view. The peasants call it "Il castello di Petrarca;" and add, with infinite simplicity, that Laura lived on the opposite side of the river, under the bed of which was a subterranean passage, by which the two lovers visited each other. Nothing is however more certain, than

that these ruins are those of the Chateau belonging to the lords or seigneurs of Avignon. The bishop of Cavaillon, in the frequent visits which he used to make to Petrarch, resided there.—The poet's dwelling was much lower down, nearer to the margin of the Sorgue, as evidently appears from his minute description of it, and his quarrel with the Naiads of the stream, who encroached during the winter on his little adjoining territory. No vestiges of it are now discernible.

I sat me down on the verge of the bason, to consider the scene around, and the romantic assemblage of objects which presented themselves on every side. I regarded with a mixt sensation of pleasure and of pain, the valley and the fountain which had been witnesses to Petrarch's complaints, and hopeless passion. I attempted to discern the cavern, which, during the summer, when the waters of the Vaucluse are low, admits into the bowels of the rock, and where he used to enter alone in the dead of the night, to indulge



indulge his despair in that frightful seclusion. While I was engaged in these reflections, the day darkened in, and a sudden storm of rain, from which I was completely sheltered by the incumbent mountain, issuing from a collection of black clouds overhanging the spot, spread through the whole landscape a majestic and awful sublimity. When it was past, I retired, though with slow and reluctant steps, from this lovely and celebrated solitude.

Before I got into my carriage, the peasant who had conducted me to the fountain carried me to a house situated in the valley, where are still preserved two portraits of the lovers, who have conducted to render Vacluse immortal. My whole attention was directed to that of Laura. She appears in the earliest bloom of youth, such as she is described by Petrarch on that morning when he first beheld her. A certain air of playful gaiety seems spread over her countenance. Her eyes are large; and of a deep hazel, the nose

justly proportioned, and the countour of her face a faultless oval. Her hair is confined by a fillet, braided and adorned with pearls; its colour approaches to yellow. Over her neck is a faint shade of gauze; her robe is of a pale red, and her arms are covered with a sort of glove, which descends half way the hands. In one of them, she holds an amaranth, emblematical of immortality.—Petrarch is depicted as in middle life, of an engaging figure, and his brows bound with laurel.

I returned to Avignon in the evening, and quitted it on the morning of the ensuing day. At Orange, where I breakfasted, it was impossible not to dedicate an hour to the remains of the Roman theatre, and the triumphal arch of Marius; edifices the most august and magnificent, altho' deformed by the lapse of near two thousand years, and of which I should perhaps give you a description, if it had not already been done by preceding travellers.—I continued my journey along  
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the eastern bank of the Rhone. On the other side appear the high mountains of the Vivarais, covered with snow, and to the right are those of Dauphiné, extending to the Alps, with which they mingle. As I advanced north, the climate became more rude and piercing; the breeze blew with a redoubled keenness, and chilled the spring just opening. I arrived at Lyons after three days journey. My road from thence to this city lay through the provinces of Beaujolois and Forez; the first of these, though hilly, is finely cultivated. Between Lyons and Roanne, I passed the high mountain of Tarare, so dreaded in the last century. From the summit is a prodigious prospect, only bounded towards Savoy by the Alps, which form a vast barrier, covered with eternal snow. At Roanne, I entered the Forez, a small province, barren, uncultivated, and thinly inhabited. A chain of lofty hills, or rather mountains, extends across it; thick forests of pine and fir cover the steep acclivities, and afford refuge to wolves and boars, which are found in great numbers. Scarce a hamlet

is



is seen in several miles ; and the silence, the depopulation, and romantic solitudes through which I passed, strongly reminded me of Sweden or Finland.

I arrived at Thiers Wednesday evening. It is a considerable town, situate on the rapid descent of a mountain, from whence is beheld a most delicious landscape. The country extends for many leagues, on all sides, in a cultivated plain, terminated by another range of mountains. Clermont is distinctly seen at the distance of five-and-twenty miles. This rich tract of the Auvergne is denominated "La Limagne." It is a basin surrounded by rocks and hills. the soil is uncommonly exuberant, and inferior to no part of France. Several fine streams water it, and add to the beauty of the scene.

I got to this city yesterday. The situation is agreeable, on a little eminence, to which the access is gradual and easy. The place itself seems to have been built in an age the most barbarous. The streets are.

are so narrow and winding, that no carriage can enter them, and the buildings correspond to the other parts; but to compensate for this inconvenience, the suburbs are charming, and the houses modern and elegant. I visited, this morning, the petrifying spring, which Charles the ninth is said to have surveyed with so much wonder and pleasure. It is only a quarter of a mile from the town. In a course of ages, it has formed a ridge of stone or incrustation, not less than sixteen feet in height, above a hundred feet long, and in some parts near ten in thickness. As it impeded, and at length totally stopped the current of a little rivulet which intersected its course, the inhabitants were obliged to dig a passage through it. The stream is now directed into another channel, and has begun to form a new bridge across the rivulet into which it falls.

My intention was, to have penetrated farther into this romantic province, but the season is yet too early, to permit the ascending any of the highest mountains.

I should,

I should, however, certainly have gone into Usson, which is only ten leagues distant, if any remains of the castle had existed. I need not remind you, that Margaret of Valois, wife to Henry the fourth, was shut up in it during twenty years. A gentleman who resides at Issoire, near the spot, gave me this description of it.

“The castle of Usson stood upon a  
“rock almost inaccessible; at the foot of  
“which flowed a little river. The queen,  
“by a masterly piece of address, expelled  
“the Marquis de Canillac, and rendered  
“herself mistress of the place. It has  
“been demolished by time, and the avidity of the neighbouring peasants, who  
“have removed almost all the stones  
“which composed the castle. Some ruins  
“yet remain, in the last stage of decay,  
“which the vulgar apprehend to have  
“been formerly sacred to religious purposes, and which they denominate,  
““Les Chapelles de la Reine Marguerite.”  
“It is true they were erected by the  
“Queen; but she had dedicated them to  
“pleasure,



“pleasure, not devotion, and gave ren-  
“dezvous in these apartments to the  
“neighbouring nobility of Auvergne.  
“No other traces remain at this time of  
“Usson.”

My letter is already of an immoderate  
length; I shall only add to it, that I am

Yours, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R. XVII.

Bourges in Berri,  
16th of May, 1776.

I Left Clermont sooner than I had intended, in compliance with an invitation which I could not refuse, to spend some time at the Chateau de P——, belonging to the Count de L——. The house is situated in an unfrequented part of Auvergne, towards the confines of the Bourbonnois, on a rising ground, which commands an enchanting prospect. Through the plain beneath, flows the river Allier, mentioned in terms of such lively admiration by Madame de Sevigné, and on whose banks, she says, might yet be discovered some of the shepherds

shepherds of fiction and romance. Monsieur de L—— was not at home, and I was received by the Countess in a manner the most noble and polite. She did me the honour to detain me five days, which I spent in such a manner, as never to be erased from my remembrance. I could describe to you her person, but that I shall give you a more just idea of it, in saying, it strikingly resembled the portrait of the duchess of Mazarin, as drawn by the Abbé de St. Real. Her other accomplishments were not inferior to her beauty; and when she danced the Bourrée, a dance peculiar to Auvergne, I thought Hortensia Mancini was not comparable to Madame de L——. I took my leave with that reluctance natural to a person impressed with pleasure and respect.

At Montpensier, I alighted to view the mount, on which formerly stood the castle, now totally demolished. It is rendered famous in history by the death of Louis the eighth, king of France, and  
 Q. — father



father of St. Louis. He expired there, in 1226, on his return from the siege of Avignon, and, as was supposed, of poison, administered to him by the Count de Champagne.

I arrived the ensuing day at Moulins. It stands on a fine plain, close to the river Allier, along the sides of which are planted walks of elm, poplar, and aspin. The city, though capital of the province of Bourbonnois, is mean, and ill built. I hurried away to look at the Mausoleum of Henry duke of Montmorenci, in the church of the nunnery of the Visitation. It was erected to his memory by the Duchess Marie Felice des Ursins. I regarded this superb monument with sensations of the deepest pity for the unfortunate hero to whom it was raised. Castelnau-dari, and Leytoure, and Toulouse crowded into my mind.—The tomb is composed of the most beautiful and costly marbles. The duke appears in a reposing attitude, his left arm supported on his helmet. By him sits his widow, her eyes directed

directed to heaven, her hands clasped, and through her whole figure an expression of disconsolate sorrow strongly marked.

It is a delightful ride from Moulins to Nevers, through the Bourbonnois and Nivernois. In the centre of the city, on the summit of a hill, is built the palace of the ancient Dukes of Nevers. It appears to be a production of the sixteenth century, and, though beginning to exhibit marks of decay, is yet a model of beauty and delicacy in Gothic architecture. The apartments are hung with tapestry of two hundred years, and through them is spread an air of grotesque and rude magnificence. I was detained in one of the chambers during some minutes, by a portrait of Madame de Montespan. She appears rising from a superb couch, the curtains of which are drawn back and supported by Cupids. Her attitude is half voluptuous, half reflective. She is wrapped in a negligent dishabille. Her hair floats down over her shoulders and neck

in wanton ringlets. She rests her head on her left hand. One of her feet is concealed by her robe; but the other, which is naked to the mid-leg, and on which the painter, with wondrous taste, has exhausted all his art, is placed on an embroidered cushion. Her slippers are thrown carelessly by.—I was charmed with the piece.

I passed the Loire at La Charité, when I entered the province of Berri; the distance from thence to this city is about twelve leagues. The country is much inferior in beauty and cultivation to that between Moulins and Nevers. Thick woods, or barren heaths, destitute of inhabitants, constitute the far greater part. Bourges is situate in the midst of a plain, open and level as the sea. It is of a very considerable size, and of high antiquity. Most of the houses forcibly evince this latter claim, by the barbarism of their construction, which marks an age of extreme rudeness and unacquaintance with the arts. I have seen scarce an edifice  
which



which does not appear to have stood many hundred years. — The “Hotel de Ville” was built by the celebrated Jacques Cœur, well known in the French history, by his greatness, his exile, and misfortunes. Over the portal, is a fine statue of Charles the seventh, clad in complete armour, and mounted on horseback. That prince usually held his court here; and you will certainly recollect, that, during the extreme distress in which his affairs were involved, at the commencement of his reign, the English, elated with their victories under Henry the fifth, bestowed on him the contemptuous appellation of “Le petit Roi de Bourges,” from the loyal and constant attachment which the citizens bore him.

The tower, denominated “La grosse tour,” in which Louis the twelfth was detained a prisoner more than two years, by the Lady of Beaujeu, exists no longer. It was demolished in 1651, by order of Cardinal Mazarin, during the minority of Louis the fourteenth, and a modern build-

ing has been constructed on the spot, of the stones which composed it.

I went to look at the tomb of Jane of Valois, daughter to Louis the eleventh, and wife to Louis the twelfth, whom he repudiated, to marry Anne of Bretagne, on his accession to the crown. She retired to this city, and having dedicated her remaining days to piety, expired in the nunnery of St. Jane, which she had founded. One of the nuns shewed me, through the grating, her slippers and nuptial robes, which are preserved with great care ; and she added, that innumerable miracles had been wrought by her intercession and relics.

The cathedral is a most august and magnificent edifice ; though the external part of the building does not correspond in beauty or symmetry to that within. It is of prodigious dimensions, far exceeding any we have in England, and the quantity of painted glass is scarce inferior to that of Gouda in Holland. John duke of Berri,

Berri, Brother to Charles the fifth king of France, reposes in the subterranean chapel beneath a marble tomb of costly workmanship. He is known in history under the unhappy reign of Charles the sixth, when the frenzy with which that prince was seized left a full career to the intrigues and ambition of his uncles.

Scarce any other objects present themselves to the eye in this city except ruins, and I am almost afraid as I walk through the narrow winding streets, lest the buildings should fall upon my head. If Charles the seventh could revive, I am persuaded he would perfectly recognize the place, which appears to have undergone very little alteration, or received any embellishment, in more than three centuries which have elapsed since his death.

Louis the eleventh was born at Bourges, and in the "Hotel de Ville" is a painting figurative of this event. France, under the figure of a woman, appears rising from her throne to receive the medallion



dallion of that monarch, which is presented to her by the Genius of Berri.

This province, though large and naturally fertile, is little cultivated or improved. This chiefly results from the want of a navigable river, by which the grain and other productions might be transported to different quarters of the kingdom.

To-morrow morning I leave Bourges. From Orleans or Blois you may expect to hear of

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Blois, Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1776.

**I** Staid some hours at Mehun-sur-Yeure in Berri, to contemplate the magnificent remains of the castle. It is only four leagues distant from Bourges, and is rendered famous in history by the death of Charles the seventh who constructed it, and who expired there by a voluntary abstinence from food, in the terror of being poisoned by his own son. The situation is not favoured by nature, and corresponds ill to the grandeur of the structure. It stands in a wide extended plain, sheltered by deep woods. At its foot flows the little river Yeure, which dividing at the spot into several streams,  
forms

forms a number of marshy islands covered with willows. Though the castle has been consumed by lightning, and injured by the lapse of time, superadded to the depredations of the neighbouring peasants, yet its ruins are even now inexpressibly august and beautiful. I visited every part of it which was accessible. The great tower is in high preservation, and three of the apartments which appear to have been rooms of state, might almost be inhabited. The chamber where, as tradition says, the unhappy prince breathed his last, is in one of the smaller towers, all entrance into which is obstructed by the stones which have fallen from above. The whole edifice is composed of a stone nearly equal to marble in whiteness and durability. An enormous fossé surrounds it. In the centre is the chapel, the workmanship and delicacy of which excite astonishment. It appears to me to be one of the finest monuments now existing, of the taste and style of architecture in the fifteenth century, when the arts began



gan slowly to awake from their slumber of so many ages.

Charles the seventh is depicted by the French historians under much the same colours as Pope in his Iliad has drawn the portrait of Paris. Naturally brave, munificent, amiable, protecting and cultivating all the elegant occupations of a liberal mind; but sinking continually into an enervate weakness, and sacrificing every grand or patriotic sentiment to the seductive enchantment of female beauty.

—The castle of Mehun appears never to have been the favourite residence of any succeeding king. It was neglected by Charles's immediate successors, lost in the superior lustre of Fontainebleau and Chambord under Francis the first, and ultimately sold by Louis the fourteenth, to support his ruinous and expensive wars in the last century.

I pursued my journey through the Berri and Sologne to Orleans, where I arrived the ensuing day. The entrance  
is

is noble and striking from the south, over a fine bridge across the Loire of nine arches. The city itself is in general very meanly built, and the streets narrow to an excess, one only excepted which conducts from the bridge, and is composed of modern, elegant buildings. In this stands the celebrated monument, where Charles the seventh and the Maid of Orleans are represented kneeling before the body of Jesus, extended on the Virgin's lap. It was erected by order of that monarch in 1458, to perpetuate his victories and triumph over the English. All the figures are in iron. The King appears bare-headed, and by him lies his helmet surmounted with a crown. Opposite to him is the Maid uncovered, and in the same attitude of grateful devotion to Heaven. It is a most precious and invaluable remain of antiquity.

In the "Hotel de Ville" is a portrait of the same extraordinary and immortal woman, which I studied long and attentively. It was done in 1581, and is the

the oldest original extant. The painter seems to have drawn a flattering resemblance, and to have decorated her with imaginary charms. Her face though long, is of exceeding beauty, heightened by an expression of intelligence and grandeur rarely united. Her hair falls loosely down her back. She wears a sort of bonnet, enriched with pearls, and shaded with white plumes, tied under her chin with a fillet. About her neck is a little band, and lower down on her bosom, a necklace composed of small links. Her habit, which is a woman's, I find difficult exactly to describe. It fits close to the body, and is cut or flashed at the elbows. Round her waist is an embroidered girdle, and in her right hand she wields the sword with which she expelled the enemies of her country. I am not surprized at the animated and enthusiastic attachment which the French still cherish for her memory. The critical and desperate emergency in which she appeared the phenomenon of her sex; her youth, and previous obscurity; the unparralleled success

R

which



which crowned her enterprize; the cruel and detestable sentence by which she expired; the air of the marvellous spread over the whole narration, encreased and strengthened by that veneration which time affixes to every great event—all these united causes conspire to place her above mortality. Rome and Athens would have ranked her among the tutelary deities, and have erected temples to her worship; nor can I help being amazed, that amid the infinity of modern saints who croud and disgrace their churches, no altar has yet been placed to the Maid of Orleans.

The environs of Orleans, more especially in Sologne on the southern side of the Loire, are very agreeable. It is in general a level country covered with corn and vines. I rode out during my stay there to "La Source." The villa is rendered celebrated by the abode of Lord Bolingbroke, who passed the chief part of his exile in this retreat. Near the house in a bottom, is the spring from which its  
name

name is derived. It may be regarded as a most extraordinary phænomenon. The water rises out of the earth from a narrow aperture in a prodigious column, and forms immediately a beautiful and considerable river called the Loiret, which winds its course about two leagues, and is then lost in the Loire. Monsieur B—, to whom the place now belongs, has deformed and totally disfigured this charming fountain, by an ill-judged and mistaken taste. Instead of a dark and gloomy hollow shaded by deep woods, and adapted to the horror of the scene, in the midst of which formerly rose the column, the opening has been enlarged, and it now only appears to bubble up scarce above the surface of the earth, in the middle of a shallow artificial basin. No trees or umbrage of any kind conceal or shelter it, and after passing through a narrow channel, it is dispersed in form of a looking-glass before the house. It is impossible to view so ridiculous and absurd a metamorphosis, without the greatest regret.

I left Orleans Sunday morning, and arrived here the same evening. A curiosity to visit the tomb of Louis the eleventh, who is interred at "Notre Dame de Clery," induced me to take that road though less direct. I passed the bridge of St. Mesmin with Brantome in my hand, and attempted, from his minute and his exact description, to ascertain the spot where Francis duke of Guise was killed by Meré Poltrot.

The church of Clery was built by Louis the eleventh, who had always a singular and capricious devotion for the Virgin, to whom it is dedicated. He always denominated her "Ma bonne notre Dame de Clery." From a similar principle he ordered his body to be interred there, in a mausoleum which he had himself erected. The Hugonots during the civil wars violated the tomb, and threw the bones about the church with savage ferocity. Louis the thirteenth caused a new monument to be raised in 1622. It is of white



white marble, and well executed. The king is in an attitude of prayer, his hands raised to heaven. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, was originally buried in the same tomb, and Charles the eighth caused his heart to be deposited there near his father.

I crossed the Loire again at Beaugency, and spent the whole afternoon in the gardens and groves of Menars. This was the seat of the celebrated Madame de Pompadour, who began to beautify the place, and bequeathed it at her death to the Marquis de Marigny her only brother. The situation, on a high range of hills overhanging the Loire, is of unparalleled beauty; and the eye is continually regaled on every side with a prospect the most extensive, delicious, and cultivated. Towns and palaces, and castles, intermixed with forests, hamlets, abbeys, and vineyards, are spread below. A noble river pouring through the vale, diffuses plenty and fertility in its progress. The gardens themselves are

laid out with great elegance, and adorned with a number of statues, chiefly presented to the Marquis by his late Majesty. A Pasiphaë lamenting Phaeton, and beginning to take root, detained me some minutes; but this figure was effaced by an Atlas, than which nothing can be more perfect. The statue is of more than human proportions. He is in the act of attempting to tear himself from the rock into which he is about to be transformed, and all his muscles are in the most violent state of exertion. The sculptor has found means to give a sort of suction to the stone, which appears to draw in his members, and in some parts to have taken possession of them. It is a master piece of workmanship.—Monsieur de Marigny has prodigiously improved the place since the Marchioness of Pampadour's death. The terrace does not yield to that of Windsor or St. Germain; and the woods, through which winds a murmuring rivulet, are of the most lonely and secluded solitude. In the midst of them, concealed under a thick umbrage, appears a Cupid. He seems

seems as just alighted on a pedestal covered with roses. Nothing can exceed the archness of his regard. It makes one tremble—but he has his finger on his lips.

To-morrow you shall hear more. I am fatigued, but it is the fatigue of pleasure.

Ever yours.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XIX.

Blois, Wednesday, 15th May, 1776.

**I**T is impossible for the coldest bosom not to feel some emotions of pleasure, at the view of a place so renowned in the page of history, as the city from whence I write. Judge then what I feel, who cannot behold the spot where any great achievement has been performed in ages past, without the liveliest enthusiasm! Imagine the sensations with which I look upon the castle, where Louis the twelfth, the father of his people, was born; in which were solemnized the nuptials of Margaret, sister of Francis the first, and of the second Margaret of Valois, wife of Henry the fourth! where Isabella of Bavaria,

varia, Queen of France, and Mary of  
 Medicis were imprisoned! within whose  
 walls the duke and Cardinal of Guise  
 were sacrificed to the vengeance of  
 Henry the third! where Valentina of  
 Milan, where Anne of Bretagne, where  
 Claude her daughter, and Catherine of  
 Medicis, so renowned for her genius and  
 her crimes, expired!——I tread with re-  
 verence over the ground, rendered in  
 some degree sacred, and view with a so-  
 lemn delight the towers once inhabited  
 by Queens and Monarchs, now tending  
 to decay, or covered with ivy which  
 spreads a twilight through the apartments  
 at noon-day. An air of melancholy  
 splendor and departed greatness is strongly  
 spread through the whole, and encreased  
 by the silence which reigns universally.  
 The cyphers and devices of succeeding  
 princes are faintly discerned on the front  
 of the edifice, or over the portals. I distin-  
 guish the Porcupine of Louis the twelfth,  
 the Salamander of Francis, and the amo-  
 rous Moon of his son Henry. I trace the  
 remains of the gallery constructed by  
 Henry

Henry the fourth, and enter the walk of elms planted by Catherine of Medicis; or survey with regret the superb and unfinished palace of Gaston duke of Orleans. —You must pardon these unconnected exclamations, which have escaped me in spite of myself. I will now endeavour to give you some more methodical and intelligible description of the castle.

It stands on a rock immediately above the Loire, and commanding a view hardly, if at all inferior to that of Menars. The ancient Counts of Blois held their constant residence here, and erected the first Chateau, of which no remains now subsist, except one large round tower. Guy, last Count of the house of Chatillon, sold it to Louis Duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the sixth, and who was afterwards murdered in the "Rue Barbette" at Paris. It descended from him to Louis the twelfth his grandson. The eastern and southern sides as they now subsist, are of his construction. Over the grand gateway is an equestrian statue of the King himself, habited



bited in a coat of mail. The style of architecture merits attention. Some of the figures which support the windows, are of a nature so incredibly indecent, of a lasciviousness so studied and grotesque, that one is surprized, in a pious century, how a prince such as Louis the twelfth is depicted, or a Queen of manners so rigid and reserved as Anne of Bretagne, could permit them to be placed in the most conspicuous part of a royal palace. It is a striking demonstration of the gross manners and unpolished barbarism of the age.

The northern front of the castle was built by Francis the first, soon after his accession to the throne. A more splendid style, a more costly workmanship, approaching in delicacy and elegance to the Roman edifices, discriminate it from the former, and we evidently trace the improvement of an age more refined and liberal. The apartments are all noble, spacious, and kingly. I was shewn the celebrated chamber in which Henry duke of Guise was assassinated. The stone  
tinged

tinged with his blood, has been almost scraped away by the devotion or curiosity of different persons. At the western extremity of the building is the tower of Chateau-Regnaud, famous for the murder of the Cardinal of Guise. I went into the dungeon where he passed the night previous to his execution, with the Archbishop of Lyons. Two doors of massy iron admit into a gloomy chamber vaulted, and only lighted by one small window closed with a grate. The figure of the room is irregular. I measured it by my steps. It is twenty feet in diameter. In the centre is a round hole big enough to receive the body of a man, and under it are three ranges of subterranean dungeons, one beneath the other. The Cardinal was put to death in a sort of recess hollowed in the wall resembling a chimney, on the day following that of his brother the Duke. The guards executed their order with halberds.—They perished the just martyrs of an inordinate ambition; and this is almost the only murder mentioned in history, for which the

the circumstances seem to plead a full exculpation.

At the eastern end of the northern front is the "Salle des Etats," where Henry the third assembled the states twice during his reign. It is a vast hall now disused and ruinous. In the chimney, the bodies of the duke and Cardinal of Guise are said to have been consumed to ashes. You will perhaps recollect the animated apostrophe of their mother to the statue of Louis the twelfth, on receiving the news of her children's death. She was daughter to Renee de Ferrara, and granddaughter to that monarch. Henry the third sent her a captive to Amboise, after the execution of her sons. Having embarked on the Loire, she returned towards the castle, and invoking with lifted arms the shade of her great ancestor, "Ah! "grand Roi," exclaim'd she, "avez-vous "fait batir ce Chateau, pour y faire "mourir les enfans de votre petite fille?"



The western face is the work of Gaston Duke of Orleans, son of Henry the fourth, and brother to Louis the thirteenth. It is a beautiful and princely edifice, but unhappily left incomplete by his death. Mansard was the architect, and more than three hundred thousand livres were uselessly expended on this sumptuous building, which is uninhabitable and already far gone in decay. Gaston prognosticated before his decease the future state of ruin in which it would be left, and exclaimed as he lay expiring, by prophetic anticipation, "*Domus mea, domus desolationis in eternum!*" All the other designs and plans of alteration he had begun were buried with him.

The gardens of the castle which were formerly very extensive, are now converted into private property. The superb gallery erected by Henry the fourth to divide the upper and lower ones, is only to be traced in its remains, as it was demolished about thirteen years ago by order of the court. Catherine of Medicis's walk

walk is however undestroyed. It is of a prodigious length, extending to the forest of Blois, and formed an avenue to the palace truly royal.

I went yesterday to Chambord, the famous palace of Francis the first. It is about four leagues from hence, on the southern side of the Loire. In a level situation, embosomed in woods, stands this fabric, which has all the appearance of one of Tasso's or Ariosto's enchanted castles, raised out of the earth by subtle magic. The enormous magnitude of the whole structure, crowned with turrets, pinnacles, domes, and towers innumerable, over which the lapse of two centuries begins to throw an air of decay and waning splendor, produce an effect to the beholder not to be communicated by description. Thick forests invest it round on all sides, and in front flows or rather stagnates a little river called the Cousson, black and full of sedges. The palace, conformable to the taste of the century in which it was built, is moated round; but

the architecture, tho' strictly Gothic, is full of beauty, and breathes no air of barbarism. A grand stair-case in the centre conducts to the different ranges of apartments. By a singular contrivance it is rendered double, and two persons go up or down at the same time without seeing each other. I cannot pretend to explain or give you an exact idea of this enigma in building, but it is curious and unique in its kind.

The chambers though now unfurnished and beginning to feel the ravages of time, are still regal and magnificent. Those occupied by the late Marechal Saxe are not totally destitute of furniture, and have been in some degree modernized. In many of them are buttresses or beams stretched across, to support the roof; they exceedingly deform the appearance of the rooms. Catherine of Medicis who had been informed by an astrologer, that she was in danger of being crushed under the ruins of a house, caused them to be placed from the terror of this prediction.

I enquired



I enquired much after the pane of glass, on which were seen the two lines written by the hand of Francis the first with a diamond. They were in a little cabinet communicating with the chapel, but are now lost by some accident. They were these:

“Toute Femme varie,

“Mal habil qui s’y fie!”

Some chagrin, caused by his mistress’s change or inconstancy, probably gave rise to this sarcasm on the sex.

Immense sums of money were expended in the erection of Chambord, and eighteen hundred workmen employed during twelve years to complete it. There are said to be twelve hundred large, and four hundred smaller apartments or cabinets in the palace. Francis entertained the Emperor Charles the fifth there, with his accustomed munificence and splendor, during the visit which he paid him

on the rebellion of the Gantois in 1540. Henry the second made some additions and embellishments to it. His father's device, a Salamander in the flames, is seen in almost every part ; and on a small tower are those of Henry himself, a Moon in form of a crescent and the letter H.

After having spent more than three hours in the different galleries or apartments, I sat down on the bank of the rivulet in front of the edifice, to contemplate it at leisure. I spread my cold provisions on the grass, under the shade of two ancient elms, and after having dined, resigned myself to all that train of reflection, which the view of so august a monument must naturally excite.

Since the decease of Marechal Saxe, Chambord is going fast to decay. Louis the fourteenth made several visits to it for the pleasure of the chace ; but his successor totally neglected it, and many hundred thousand livres would now be requisite to render it fit to receive a sovereign.

vereign. Its immense magnitude which requires continual repairs, will accelerate its downfall, and motives of oeconomy probably produce, in some future time, its entire demolition.

The city of Blois is meanly built, and many of the houses may dispute antiquity with the castle. It lies on the declivity of a hill along the northern bank of the river, and is joined to a considerable suburb on the opposite side by a modern bridge. No language can paint in colours sufficiently glowing the beauty of the Loire, or the fertility of the country thro' which it flows. The extreme poverty and misery of the peasants, amid a delicious paradise producing luxuriantly all the delicacies and elegancies of life, impresses with mingled pity, wonder, and indignation. I behold much magnificence, and more distress; one Chateau, surrounded with a thousand wretched hamlets; a luxury the most studied and enervate, contrasted with beggary and nakedness among the people; a gaiety, an enjouement,



jouement, a softness and urbanity universally characteristic of every rank, and to which it is impossible to refuse attachment and admiration.

To-morrow morning I continue my progress slowly along the Loire. Meanwhile farewell!



LETTER

LETTER XX.

Tours, Tuesday, 21st May, 1776.

**T**HE road from Blois, to this city is one of the most agreeable in France, along the high dyke of the river. Hills, whose sides are covered with vines, forests, amid which appear spires and villas, or wide plains cultivated with the most assiduous industry, continually diversify and enliven the scene.

I stopped during more than two hours to view the castle of Chaumont. It is built on a high promontory above five leagues below Blois, on the southern bank of the Loire, and commanding a most extensive prospect. The pile is Gothic,  
and

and was constructed about the middle of the fifteenth century by the Lords of the house of Amboise. The Cardinal of that name, the virtuous and incorrupt minister of Louis the twelfth, was born there, and the devices of the family are yet distinctly traced on the great towers of the edifice. They are two letters *OC* and a volcano; this, by a sort of pun which in that age was much admired, formed the word "Chau-Mont." Henry the second presented it to his mistress Diana de Poitiers, so celebrated in the annals of France. She beautified and enlarged it; the hunting horn, one of her emblems, appears in many parts of the building. On the death of her royal lover in 1559, Catherine of Medicis, who had long envied her the possession, rather compelled than requested the duchess to renounce it in her favour; but by an act of generosity worthy a queen, she gave her in return the palace of Chenonceaux-sur-Cher. Soon after the death of Catherine, it fell into the Viscount de Sardini's hands, a Lucques nobleman, who had married a lady of the house





house of Limeüil, distantly allied to that princess by blood. His descendants are now extinct.—Exactly opposite to it, about a mile from the Loire stands the castle of Onzain, in which Louis prince of Condé, slain at Jarnac, was imprisoned by Catherine of Medicis after the battle of Dreux, and during the siege of Orleans.

I arrived at Amboise the same evening. The town is mean and ill built, but has been rendered famous in story by the conspiracy in 1560, which opened the fatal wars of Calvinism and Coligni. The castle is situated on a craggy rock, extremely difficult of access, and the sides of which descend almost perpendicular. At its foot flows the Loire, which is divided into two streams by a small island. I am not surprized that the duke of Guise, in the apprehension of an insurrection among the Hugonots, chose to remove Francis the second to this fortress, as to a place of perfect safety. Only two detached parts of the ancient Chateau now remain, one of which was erected by Charles the eighth,

eighth, and the other by Francis the first. It is unnecessary to remind you that the former of those princes was born and expired here. From the hill behind the castle, is beheld another of those luxurious and enchanting landscapes, which these provinces of France continually exhibit, and where the eye wanders delighted amid a rich profusion of natural beauties.

I went the ensuing day to Chanteloup, the palace of Monsieur de Choiseul, about a mile from Amboise. Neither the situation nor the exposure are eligible. It commands a very limited prospect, and the Loire, though at so inconsiderable a distance, is scarce seen even from the upper apartments. The rooms which I was permitted to view, though splendid, were destitute of paintings or marbles, and fell far short of the magnificent ideas I had been taught to preconceive. The Duke has spent immense sums on this palace, and is at present employed in the erection of additional chambers, which will  
surpass

surpass those already finished in grandeur and elegance.

I continued my journey to this city. Tours is built in a fine plain, on the southern bank of the Loire. The surrounding country surpasses all I have yet seen in fertility and luxuriance, and every eminence, within several miles of the place is occupied by convents or villas which pleasure or superstition have erected. Among the monasteries is the celebrated one of Marmoutier, from whence Isabella queen of Charles the sixth was carried off by the duke of Burgundy, in 1417.

I made an excursion yesterday to Loches, which is ten leagues distant, through a delicious plain watered by the Cher, the Indre, and a number of rivulets that fertilize the meadows through which they run. The castle of Loches is exceedingly renowned in the history of France, and was in former ages the usual place of confinement for prisoners of the highest quality. Its origin remounts to the most remote  
T antiquity



antiquity, nor does tradition itself pretend to ascertain its founder, or the æra of its construction. Successive sovereigns enlarged, rebuilt and fortified it. Charles the seventh frequently held his court and residence there during the former part of his reign; and the duke of Alençon, a prince of the blood, was detained there a captive by that monarch's order, on account of his treasonable practices for the introduction of the English into the kingdom.

—In one of the apartments, is the iron cage in which Louis the eleventh confined the Cardinal de la Balue more than nine years. It is an inhuman engine of punishment. The form is square, and the diameter not above eleven feet. He was at length released in 1481, at the intercession of the sovereign Pontiff, and during the state of debility which preceded the king's death.

I went to view the chamber where the perfidious Ludovico Sforza the Moor was imprisoned by Louis the twelfth, from the year 1500 to 1510. It is a large apartment

ment vaulted, and in that century not improper for the confinement of a sovereign prince. One window, secured by three gratings of iron, admits light into the room, and in the midst of summer the rays of the sun enter through it about the hour of noon for a few minutes. Exactly opposite to the window on the wall, are distinctly traced the remains of a dial or meridian, upon which the sun beams played; and which, as long and uniform tradition relates, was engraven by the hand of Sforza to enliven his hours of solitude. Over the chimney is the figure of a head covered with a casque, supposed to be his. The walls and roof are likewise covered with characters and inscriptions now rendered illegible by the lapse of time.

I quitted this chamber, and descended with my guide by the light of a torch into the "Oubliettes," or subterranean dungeons. They are Labyrinths hollowed into the earth, of a vast extent and totally destitute of light. The air itself was so

moist and unwholesome, that the flambeau was almost extinguished by it. The man who attended me, made me observe in many places of the incumbent rock, round holes through which the wretched victims destined to perish in these caverns were let down. Doors of massy iron close up the entrance, and preclude all possibility of succour or escape. I was glad to leave these dismal abodes of darkness and horror, to revisit the chearful day.— The greater part of the castle is now in a state of ruin. It is notwithstanding still made use of to confine persons accused of state crimes, and there is at present a gentleman shut up for unknown causes, who has been here more than three years.

In the church, before the high altar, is interred the celebrated Agnes Soreille, mistress to Charles the seventh. The monument is composed of black marble, and on it is her effigy cut in white alabaster. If it may be supposed to resemble her person, she was feminine and delicate to the utmost degree of which the human body



body is susceptible. The face is perfectly correspondent to the other parts, and conveys an idea of uncommon loveliness mixed with exquisite fragility. Her hands which are joined in prayer are models of symmetry and proportion. Round her head is a broad fillet enriched with pearls, and a sort of necklace composed of the same ornaments falls on her bosom. She reposes on an embroidered cushion; her dress is simple, modest, concealing her limbs from view, and at her feet are two lambs emblematical of her name, Agnes. Time which respects not even beauty, has begun to injure and deface the figure and the tomb in many parts. I hung over it with extreme satisfaction during some minutes, in silence. It was not merely the consciousness of the charms she once possessed that detained and affected me:—The magnanimous heroism which actuated her conduct, and which she infused into her lover sinking under the pressure of his enemies, render her memory deservedly dear to every mind where patriotism is not extinct. Among the many

favourites of princes whom history has preserved from oblivion, none appears to have been more worthy a monarch's attachment, none so deservedly consecrated to eternal remembrance. You will recollect I doubt not, the verses of Francis the first in her honour, which particularly allude to her efforts to inspire Charles the seventh with fortitude and courage against the English, the invaders of his dominions. — A thousand fables and traditions respecting her are yet preserved among the inhabitants of Loches: Her beauty, her liberality, and her empire over the king form the principal subjects. I listened to them all with extreme satisfaction; and went to look at the tower, which is called “La Tour de la belle Agnes,” and in which, as my conductor assured me with great simplicity, Charles used from motives of jealousy, to lock her up when he went to the chase. — It is certain she resided frequently at Beaulieu, a little town only divided from Loches by the river Indre, and where are still seen the remains of a Chateau which

which belonged to her. As she expired at the abbey of Jumièges in Normandy, her body was brought by her express command to this church, to which during her life time she had made very ample donations. Louis the eleventh, though he neither honoured his father's memory, nor respected Agnes, whom it is pretended he once struck at Chinon in Touraine, yet protected her remains, and refused permission to the canons, who by an act of ingratitude to their benefactress petitioned for the removal and demolition of her tomb.

I had always read and been informed, that Ludovico Sforza duke of Milan was likewise buried in the chancel of the same church, under a plate of copper. All the French writers—even their best historians assert it is an incontestable fact.—There is notwithstanding nothing more false, and it is one of those many errors which long prescription has sanctified. The plate of copper indeed exists; but one of the priests obligingly read to me the inscription



scription on it, which is to the memory of a private family. A portrait of a warrior kneeling and in prayer, which has been always shewn as Sforza's figure, the same person assured me is that of the duke of Epernon.—No traces of any such interment are to be found among the records of the church, though that of Agnes Soreille, anterior by sixty years yet exists.—I must own this contradiction to so received an opinion may appear extraordinary;—but how many historical narrations depend upon as dubious and uncertain a basis!

I am just returned from the castle of Pleffezles-Tours, so famous for the death of Louis the eleventh. Do you remember Cominès's minute and terrifying picture of that monarch's exit?—I felt a secret horror as I entered the court and surveyed the walls once covered with iron spikes, where a continual guard kept watch during the last sad hours of the guilty and expiring monarch. It is only half a league from this city, in a plain surrounded by woods,

at

at a little distance from the Loire. The building is yet handsome though composed of brick, and now converted to purposes of commerce. In the chapel, on the right hand of the high altar, is a masterly and beautiful portrait of Louis himself. He is clad in complete armour. Within his left arm, reposing on his breast, is a standard, and with his right hand he takes off his helmet, in act of salutation to the Virgin and her infant. His harsh and unpleasing features are softened into a smile of pleasure and complacency. He seems to extend his left hand towards the child, whose eye is fixed on his with eagerness. These indications of tenderness have given room to suppose, that under the figures of Mary and Jesus, are designed Charlotte of Savoy his queen, and Charles the eighth his son. Her habit which is regal, the diadem on her brow, and more than all, a resemblance between the infant and the king which is strikingly evident, confirm strongly this supposition.

Though

Though Tours is at present an unpleasant and ill built place, it will probably be greatly changed in a few years. A very noble bridge of fifteen arches is already constructed across the river, and a street planned which will intersect the whole city. These alterations will prodigiously embellish it.

My journey begins now to draw towards its termination. You will yet hear once or twice from

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R



LETTER XXI.

Mans, Tuesday, 28th of May, 1776.

**I**T is with regret I find myself at a distance from the banks of the Loire, along which I have wandered with so sensible a pleasure. The beauty of the country on either side, the number of magnificent edifices reflected in its surface, the solemn majesty of its course, amid islands, woods, and delicious plains, or under high and hanging rocks, conspire to awaken at this enchanting season sentiments of extreme delight.

At Langeais about seven leagues from Tours, I stopped to examine the remains of the castle. They are yet noble, though  
decayed

decayed and ruinous. It is rendered celebrated in history by the nuptials of Anne of Bretagne with Charles the eighth, which were solemnized there in 1488. I arrived at Saumur the same evening. You may imagine that I could not find myself only five leagues distant from the abbey of Fontevraud, where Henry the second and Richard the first of England are interred, without a desire to visit the place. It is situated in a hollow valley near the confines of Anjou towards Touraine. Rocky hills rise behind it, and thick woods conceal it almost entirely from view. An air of melancholy and silent sequestration reigns on all sides, peculiarly characteristic of, and suitable to the gloomy devotion of monastic life. As I walked under the high and venerable rows of elm in the gardens of the convent, it was impossible not to feel in some degree those solemn and awful sensations which these religious solitudes naturally inspire. —The abbey was founded in 1096 by Robert d'Arbrissel. Its reputation for sanctity, and its vicinity to the city of  
Chinon

Chinon where Henry the second expired, were probably the chief causes of his being interred there, since none of his progenitors the Counts of Anjou had chosen it as their place of burial. You will remember that sentiments of penitence and contrition for his filial disobedience, induced Richard to order in his dying moments, that his body should be laid at the feet of his father. Eleanor of Aquitan, wife of the one and mother of the other prince, reposes in the same tomb; as do likewise Jane Countess of Provence and Queen of Sicily daughter to Henry the second and Elizabeth d'Angoulesme widow of John King of England.—The figures of all these sovereigns are executed in stone, upon the monument: But as it is at present enclosed within the grate, in that part of the choir where the Abbess and Nuns assemble for public devotion, no interest or intreaties could possibly procure me admittance into this sacred partition; and I was consequently prevented from studying it either so closely, or with that minute attention which I desired. Four

U

solemn



solemn Requiems and services are said every year for the repose of the souls of these princes, and the tomb was repaired and beautified in 1638 by order of the Abbess.

Fontevrauld, besides its high antiquity, has been ever considered as one of the most honorary and important ecclesiastical benefices in France. Many princesses of the blood have successively governed it. The revenues are immense. The number of religious of both sexes under the Abbess's direction amount to more than two hundred, and her authority both temporal and spiritual is exceedingly extensive.

I returned to Saumur at night, and left it again last Saturday. The town is small, but pleasantly situated on the Loire, across which is a long bridge continued through a number of islands. It was anciently a most important pass over the river, and of consequence frequently and fiercely disputed by either party during the civil wars

wars in the sixteenth century. The fortifications are of prodigious strength, and Henry the fourth, in the reconciliation which took place between him and Henry the third near Tours in 1589, demanded Saumur as one of the cities of safety to be delivered him. The castle overlooks the town and river. It is built on a lofty eminence, and is now only valuable as a state prison, where persons of rank are confined. The Kings of Sicily and Dukes of Anjou of the second line, who sprung from John and Philip of Valois, frequently resided there, as it constituted a part of their Angevin dominions or Appennage. It has yet a venerable and magnificent appearance.

The distance from Saumur to Angers is about thirteen leagues, the greater part along the bank of the Loire. Anjou appears to me not to yield in fertility or beauty to any province of the kingdom. Wines of the most delicious and exquisite flavour are produced in it. That of Champigny, a little village near Fontevraud, is particularly

admired.—I made a stay of two days in Angers. The city stands in a plain, and is divided into “La haute” and “La basse ville” by the river Mayenne, which winds through meadows, and is lost in the Loire five miles below the place. The castle was built by St. Louis, about the middle of the thirteenth century. The walls, fosses, and numerous towers which yet subsist, evince its former magnificence; and its situation in the centre of the city, on a rock overhanging the river, conduces to diffuse over it an air of kingly grandeur, though sunk in decay. It was the principal residence of the Kings of Sicily, as Dukes of Anjou, but is at present in a state of complete and total ruin. The cathedral is a venerable structure, and though it has undergone many alterations in the course of ages since its construction, the architecture is singular, and merits study. Here sleeps, with her ancestors, the renowned Margaret, daughter of René King of Sicily, and Queen of Henry the sixth of England. She expired, after her many intrepid, but ineffectual efforts to replace her  
her



her husband on the throne, at the castle of Dampierre in Anjou, in 1482. The English historians seem never to have followed this illustrious princess into her retreat, after Louis the eleventh had ransomed her from Edward the fourth, and procured her release from the Tower of London. She was the favourite child of René, who renounced all his claims on the provinces of Anjou and Lorraine, to obtain her freedom. Under his protection she remained at Aix in Provence, till his death necessitated her to return into the Angevin territories. She was received by an antient gentleman named Vignole, who had been long in her father's service, and afforded her an asylum. Henry Earl of Richmond, who afterwards triumphed at Bosworth, and was then a fugitive in Bretagne, came from Vannes to visit her, and demand her counsels. She urged him to his attempt against Richard the third, though she did not survive to be a witness of its success. No remains of that commanding beauty, of those numerous attractions which she

had once possessed, accompanied her in the decline of life. A French writer has drawn the portrait of Margaret, when near her end; it impresses with mingled horror and compassion. You will not recognize the Queen described by our historians in such enchanting colours. ——— “Son sang  
 “corrompu par tant de noires agitations,  
 “devint comme une poison qui infecta  
 “toutes les parties qu’il devoit nourrir: Sa  
 “peau secha jusqu’ a s’en aller en poussière; son estomac se retrecit, et ses yeux  
 “aussi creux que s’ils eussent été enfoncés avec violence, perdirent tout le  
 “feu qui avoit servi si long temps  
 “d’interprete aux grands sentimens de  
 “son ame.”

Angers is of a very considerable size, but the buildings and streets are almost as mean and antient as those of Bourges. The walls with which John king of England surrounded it in 1214, remain nearly entire, and are of a prodigious circumference.

I slept

I slept at La Fleche last night. It is a pretty town on the confines of Anjou. In the church which belonged to the Jesuits, are the hearts of Henry the fourth and Mary of Medicis, which were deposited there in consequence of their express command. I entered the province of Maine this morning. It is ten leagues from La Fleche to Mans, through a country much enclosed and finely wooded.—The situation of this city is pleasant and eligible, near the junction of two little rivers, which serpentine through a delicious plain. I went to the top of the cathedral, to enjoy one of the finest inland prospects to be imagined. Towards Normandy and Perche it is lost in clouds at a great distance. On the side of Bretagne extends the forest of Mans, where lay the scene of that extraordinary phantom which is said to have appeared to Charles the sixth, and was the principal cause of his unhappy madness. Mans is a small city, but preferable to Angers in its construction. It constituted, together with the province of which it is the capital, a  
part



part of our Henry the second's natural and hereditary dominions, which he added to those devolved to him at Stephen king of England's death, in right of his mother Matilda. In 1216 Philip Augustus reconquered it from John, and annexed it to the crown of France.

I continue my journey, in the evening, to Alençon. Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

Rouen, Monday, 3d June, 1776.

**I**T was already late, when I quitted Mans, and as Alençon is twelve leagues distant, I was obliged to stop at a little town, named "Beaumont-Le-Vif-comte," situated on the side of a steep hill, at the foot of which runs a rivulet. A delicious landscape is beheld on all sides, richly cultivated. It is near the confines of Maine and Normandy. I got to Alençon the ensuing morning. The place is of considerable size, and stands in the midst of an extensive plain. The little river Sarte washes its walls. I slept at Seez, an ancient city, and continued my route next day to L'Aigle. It is a small town, but

but known in history by its castle, of which scarce any traces now remain. Our annals inform us, that William the Conqueror frequently resided there in his visits to these his hereditary dominions; and Charles d'Espagne de la Cerda, Constable of France under the reign of John, was surprised and murdered in it by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, in the year 1354.

I crossed a considerable tract of country from L'Aigle to Evreux. This latter city is situated in a hollow vale, surrounded with lofty hills. The cathedral is a noble structure, tho' irregular in its external form.

I arrived here last Friday. Rouen is too well known and too frequently visited, to render any description of it necessary. The Seine is of unequalled beauty above and below the place, cover'd with little islands overgrown with wood, and flowing under a range of mountains. At one extremity of the city near the river, are yet beheld the remains of the palace which Henry the fifth of England began in 1419, and which



which was compleated under his unfortunate son in 1443. At an inconsiderable distance from it is the "Tour de la Pucelle," in which the Duke of Bedford confin'd the Maid of Orleans previous to her trial and condemnation. You will recollect her consequent execution and death. A statue is erected to her on the spot where this cruel Sentence was perform'd, and an inscription engraven beneath it in her honour. Who would not die to merit two of the lines which compose it?

—— "Exuit flammis quod mortale,  
"Supereft gloria nunquam moritura!"——

They exalt her above mortality. They inroll her to the most remote posterity, with the great spirits who indifferent ages have sacrificed their lives at the shrine of their country. It is the most sublime and enviable tribute which man can pay to virtue.

I went yesterday morning to visit a little priory, call'd "Notre Dame de  
"bonnes

“bonnes Nouvelles,” which is on the southern bank of the Seine. It was founded by William the Conqueror before his successful attempt on the English crown. Tradition says that Matilda his wife being at her devotions in this church, intelligence arrived that the duke of Normandy had gained the important battle of Hastings; and from this circumstance it obtained the name it bears at present. Matilda, daughter of Henry the first and mother of Henry the second was buried there; but six hundred years have erased the inscription on her tomb, of which there are now no vestiges discernible. This princess, as duchess of Normandy, resided at Rouën, and constructed the ancient bridge across the Seine; the ruins yet subsist, though it began to fall as early as the year 1502, and became totally useless before the conclusion of the sixteenth century.

The cathedral is one of the most magnificent monuments of the Gothic architecture in France. It was erected under  
William

William the Conqueror's reign, and completed in 1063. I tread with reverence among the tombs of kings and princes interred in different parts of the edifice. Here lies Rollo the Dane, founder of the Norman line destined to ascend the English throne; a fabled hero, lost in the barbarism of the times when he flourished! Two of his descendants, Dukes of Normandy, are buried near him.—The heart of Richard the first King of England, which, when dying, he ordered to be deposited in the cathedral of Rouen, is on the right hand of the high altar. It was originally preserved in a vast shrine of massy silver; but in the extreme distress occasioned by the want of money to defray the expences of St. Louis's ransom, when taken prisoner in Damietta, it was converted to the necessities of the state. His elder brother prince Henry, who died at the castle of Martel in Quercy in 1183, rests on the opposite side. Near these, reposes John duke of Bedford; an illustrious name rever'd even by his enemies, and almost destitute of a blemish if he



had not authoriz'd the death of the Maid of Orleans, the deliverer of her country. Behind the altar under a monument of exquisite workmanship, is interr'd the great Cardinal of Amboise, minister to Louis the twelfth, whom France will ever honour while patriotism and integrity are cherished among men. His effigy is represented on the tomb, kneeling and in prayer. I stood long to consider that of Louis de Brezé, Seneschal of Normandy and Count de Maulevrier; he died in 1531. The figure of the Count himself extended as dead, is one of the most masterly and beautiful productions which sculpture can exhibit. On one side is the Virgin; on the other appears his widow the celebrated Diana de Poitiers, afterwards the favour'd mistress of Henry the second. She looks down on the body of her husband; grief is marked in her features, and her habit appears to be that of a mourner. The whole is of an execution the most delicate and perfect.

Rouen, though large and commercial, is not an elegant city. The streets are  
almost

almost all narrow, ill pierced and dirty; the buildings, ancient and irregular. It was fortified by St Louis in 1253, but the walls are mostly demolished. The environs, more peculiarly the hills which overlook the Seine are wondrously agreeable, and covered with magnificent villas.

My stay here will be very short. I purpose to repass at Dieppe, and shall probably rejoin you in a few days.—I have compleated the design which I laid down at my depatture, that of visiting the unfrequented provinces of France. Throughout my whole tour I have studiously endeavoured to avoid the ground usually trod by the English in their passage from Calais into Italy, as too well known to afford you any information. It only remains to claim for the whole your candour and indulgence; on that I repose myself, and remain

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

N. WRAXALL, Jun.

F I N I S.

